THE LAURENTIANS

T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH

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THE LAURENTIANS

Books by
T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH

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8vo, 370 pages

THE CATSKILLS
8vo, 321 pages

THE LAURENTIANS
8vo, 459 pages

MAC OF PLACID
12mo, 339 pages

Photograph by Walter Rutherford.

A Montagnais Mother.

THE LAURENTIANS
THE HILLS OF THE HABITANT

BY

T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH

Author of "The Adirondacks," The Catskills," "Mac of Placid," etc.

ILLUSTRATED WITH
PHOTOGRAPHS AND
MAPS

NEW YORK
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1922

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TO

DR. AND MRS. CHARLES WHARTON STORK

Dear Wharton and Lisl:

Years ago when you took me in, infant of letters that I was, clothed me with confidence, fed me with judicious praise, and held the cup of kindly criticism to my lips, you gave me the sinews for that most importunate pursuit which cries to every man, the finding of himself. You welcomed me as fellow-traveler along the joyous, difficult road of our choice, and sustained me with your comradship, ever loyal and comprehending.

What disappointments we have faced, what satisfactions shared, we know and have privately recorded. But what may lie ahead we cannot know. And so I write these words of dedication to you both, as an inscription of friendship on the future, and as a symbol of that other unwritten dedication we have made, to our art, and to each other.

Faithfully yours,

MORRIS.

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THE LAURENTIANS

THE LAURENTIANS

CHAPTER I

THOSE ALLURING LAURENTIANS

THERE are those who travel carefully, with forethought and porters, with guide-books and account-books and insurance papers. They proceed from place to place without fatigue, are prudent as to companions and long-sighted in regard to their three meals a day, their eight hours' sleep. Events lie orderly down their calendar, and their conclusions are as predictable as an astronomer's eclipses. Where the hotels are not starred they do not go.

I have no quarrel with such, being myself not the first to eschew comfort; but they, I am afraid, will be thrown into a simmer of exasperation by this book. For it is a record of things that should not be allowed to happen to the accurate tourist. It is an account, as truthful as I can remember and as frank as I dare say, of a roving commission tendered by me to myself over a country lying just beyond my imagination.

This country's boundaries are the St. Lawrence

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River on the south, the Ottawa on the west, and the Saguenay toward the east, with an arrangement of mystery and mountains, called the Height of Land, for northern limit. Within these self-set borders I was to be free—free to roam or ruminate, to fly or float or foot it as I chose, to parley with natives or meditate about them in cautious silence. This book is the echo of that meditation. Its narrative of meals missed and unpremeditated friendships made, of new territories seen and happy sufferings muddled through, will doubtless seem but one long process of unnecessary pain to those who live by itineraries alone. For, during those months in my haphazard Eden, I knew about as much of the morrow as a fortune-teller; and cared less, having no one, not even myself, to deceive.

Of course, even in Eden, one must obey the laws, such as the law of gravitation and the rules for taking trout. And, even in Eden, happiness is enhanced by the gentle practice of one's vocation; not to the degree of that hopeless disease, busyness—but to the extent of clothing naked time with what truths and beauty become it easily.

The first truth learned was this:

Three hours' progress north from Montreal discloses an unobstructed out-path to the Pole. Further, three days' search in Canada's finest library had not disclosed a single book describing

this great wonderland of the Laurentian Mountains. So it seemed an alluring thing to stick a note-book in my hip-pocket and a duffle bag on my back and explore this *terra non confirmata*. I took care not to travel with the note-book in hand. I had no desire to tabulate all the places that a tourist should accomplish in order to say that he has done the thing with a clear conscience; neither did I desire that the natives should feel honor-bound to perjure themselves for advertisement's sake. What I wanted was the double elation of nibbling at new lands, and then numbing my hearers with tales of exploit in them. But rest easy; I more than nibbled, and I shall less than numb. Sincerity is the soul of truth. If I have journeyed skipbazardly, seen superficially, and reported but a part, yet I have not committed Munchausen herein. There was too much of true delight, too much delicious mishap, to require the spice of unveracity: But enough of prologue.

Canada had always been to me, the suburban-born, the epitome of all promised lands. From the first time that I had looked on her map of sparsely named territories stretching north into the invisible, and particularly from the time that I had first stood on the walls of Quebec and stared into the blue passes of the distant Laurentians, Canada had beckoned. In those exquisitely er-

ratic moments, when every man stands on his Darien, I had imagined Hudson's Bay my exploring-ground. During the more prosaic residue of time, Canada remained an inexhaustible feeding-ground for my imagination.

Finally, when the stubborn dream stood in the doorway of possibility and beckoned to me, as dreams will, I recalled that vision of the blue Laurentians from Quebec. It seemed luck enough to penetrate those passes. When I looked up the subject and found that, geologically, the Laurentian formation covered two million square miles, it seemed more than enough. I determined to limit my wanderings to the Province of Quebec. But even this proved unnecessarily spacious, being somewhat larger than the combined area of the British Isles, France, Germany, Italy, Holland, and Belgium.

In dismay I wrote to Ottawa, asking the kind officials of the Geological Survey for help in reducing their Laurentians to tourist size. They offered me the Ottawa-St. Lawrence-Saguenay-Height of Land enclosure in which to do my roaming, together with the maps of those parts of the region which had been surveyed.

These maps stated the proposition from which I was to prove my pleasure. For practical purposes it seemed best to devote myself to a triangle whose base was nearly parallel to the St. Law-

rence from Ottawa to Tadousac at the mouth of the Saguenay, roughly four hundred miles long. The eastern limit of the triangle, the Saguenay, extended up that river and across Lake St. John into the wilderness toward Mistassini, say three hundred miles, to be intersected by the western side of the triangle running northeastward up the valley of the Gatineau and across the Transcontinental at Parent Station and on toward Mistassini, another three hundred miles. This area of say 45,000 square miles, trifling as it was compared with the total of explorability, seemed sufficiently generous for one summer. The next thing needed was a tentative route, if only for the pleasure of abandoning it.

It had been much easier for Cæsar to divide Gaul into three parts than to conquer it; and I, too, found dividing easier than connecting. My triangle fell apart with great facility, into an obvious western third (which comprised the country between the Ottawa and the waters of the St. Maurice), with the watershed of the St. Maurice for the middle and with the Laurentide, Lake St. John, and Saguenay waters for final third. But to join these scattered objectives into a practicable procession of places was a Baedeker-like job which made me giddy with map-gazing. Here lay a magnanimous land before me. Why should I reduce it to an ignoble system of station-stops?

I had a few hundred days, and a few hundred dollars. I had also a great desire to put Montreal to the south of me. To do this logically I must take the train north. So I did.

CHAPTER II

ONE WAY IN

THE train had vacated the Place Viger Station of the C. P. R. and had crossed the first few rivers which make Montreal so very much an island before I had aroused myself from the coma of disappointment which had enveloped me at the disruption of some dreams. For I was being launched on the wilderness alone, and that after having been enticed into it by one of its denizens on promise of expert accompaniment.

It had come about this way: Last summer, I had determined not to write another travel-book until I could afford to, nor make any more friends for the same period. These earnest resolutions took place in May. In June my plans for the new travel-book with a new friend were not only hatched, but chirping all over the place. This is told to show that woman can still produce her effects at will.

The lady was one of the busy maternal sort at our club who resented the large frequent gaps in my education. I did too, but in nothing like the way I resented her wise and Christian at-

temps to fill them in. O foolish me! Had I only spent the time trying to learn, that I wasted endeavoring to elude, I should by now have been well advanced in knitting and French conversation and other domestic matters.

But, anyway, she did me an invaluable turn one day by running up and saying; "Morris dear, I have found *just* the person you ought to know. You'll *like* him."

"I 've just resolved not to like anybody for a year," I replied.

"Come, silly. He 's waiting for us with the canoe. He 's an Indian, the nicest, most refined, attractive Indian you have ever seen. Please drop those things and hurry."

I followed, of course, expecting to see the usual thing in grease and gravity, which is termed an Indian, squatting in the sand. Instead I saw a man of medium height, standing in a canoe and taming it for the benefit of some youngsters. His mastery of it was as complete and agile as a cowboy's control of his pony. When he saw us he wheeled the shell with three or four caresses of the paddle; and I saw that he was greaseless, and, barring an aboriginal profile, which Greek sculpture never compassed, scarcely savage. His hair was dark and his eyes shone as inscrutably as the sons' of the Sphinx should. But a West Pointer could not have tempered his manners to

the occasion more courteously, nor have helped our adoptive mama into the canoe with a better grace. I was interested; she was triumphant.

"Say your Indian name, Fred," the lady commanded.

"Kaiantanoron," with a half-smile that showed teeth, white and regular.

"And now tell us about the North," she begged enthusiastically; "tell us about your people, about everything."

We had n't been out twenty minutes before my heart began to sink. I felt that I was going to like this person, this educated savage, in whose veins ran the old fire of the Iroquois tempered with the blood of France. Forty minutes and I thought "the region that breeds the like of him is worth exploring." When we came to the carry he swung the canoe upon his shoulders as a man puts on a hat.

To cut a long summer short, I came to like and admire this man from the land of my imaginings, whose talk was as a persistent breeze from the North. We spent evenings together before autumn camp-fires, evenings that brought forth shadowy plans running to the accompaniment of wilderness waters and the drip of paddles. Fred Beauvais' youth had been circled by the calls of wolves and lighted by the northern lights. As he talked of *ouananiche* and rapids and strange

Indian ways the toxin of travel fermented in my blood. And during the winter it finally boiled over and hardened into this proposition:

"You guide me there beyond the thought of things and I 'll pay our paddlefare with a book. Is that a go?"

"Sure," said he.

"Sure" was Beauvais' great word, the French-Canadian in him coming out.

Now I was on the train, and he was hopelessly detained in town. He had said good-by at the gate, trying not to see my flannel shirt and the white waters ahead of me and the freedom of days unharried by the telephone. But I saw their reflection in his eyes, and could only make up lies about expecting him next week. The future, which had appeared so exhilarating as divided between us, showed heavy enough ahead when it had to be survived alone. The train was tearing through fields glad with May, but I could not see them glad. I was out of sympathy with Providence.

Later I came to see the wisdom of Providence which was concerned more with my future than with my feelings of the moment. I see now that had I journeyed with Fred all the way, equipped with his companionship, I should have but grazed the surfaces of others that I met, should merely have culled their superficial eccen-

tricities and difference and left the heart unlearned.

For now I know this: The medium of travel for a person on my errand is loneliness. The secret of successful travel is not to go from place to place but from person to person. The corrugations on our planet are much alike and it matters little whether a waterfall be fifty feet higher than the last. But to pass from man to woman, from girl to fellow, each native in his proper niche, meeting them as strangers but leaving them as friends by virtue of some news, some affinity, some hardship, or even some turn of weather shared—this is travel, and on a road where perennial freshness lies. But to travel thus the stern condition exists that one must go alone, face dark arrivals in strange villages, dare uncompanioned distances. Then only will the genius of the neighborhood be apprehended. Then strangerly kindnesses take on a deep significance and one becomes newly aware of humanity, and also learns the peculiar flavor of each environment. So, in the end, the lonely are blessed for they see the brotherhood of man.

But that is in the end. In the beginning it is the loneliness that is chiefly apparent. On my train (a week-end train full of girls in khaki and brokers in fishing-kits, with a sprinkling of golfers in their usual rapt discussion), I felt that a sight

of Lake Erie falling over a corner of the Himalayas could scarcely repay me for the sensation of infantile frustration which was accompanying me into this futility, this slipping of the noose of isolation over my head. Had it not been for boasts at home, I think I should have crawled from the cars and slunk back. The train was now entering the foot-hills of the Laurentians, just in time.

This branch of the C. P. R., Montreal to Mont Laurier, is 150 miles long and in that distance offers all things to anybody. Suburbs, fields, hills, mountains, wilderness, the Wilderness! One can breakfast regally at the Ritz and dine divinely with the red gods four hours later in virgin dells. A mile from the rails on either side one can find places never before employed by picnickers for a tin-can holiday. Running out on this railroad spur is like climbing back up one's family tree; at the end is the primeval.

Nor do you have to go the whole way, either. Beyond Ste. Marguerite you can drop off at any station, drive a few miles on roads that taper into trails, and there you are with nothing but wilderness and white sunlight betwixt you and the Pole. That, in my opinion, is the supreme claim of the Laurentians. For scenery I choose their sisters, my Adirondacks; and for peculiar animals I suppose that Africa still leads. But for contiguous opportunities of freedom in a land, lake-set and

limitless, and incredibly near at hand, Laurentian-land has no rival nowadays.

There was one very exasperating thing about all these merry people on the train; they all looked as if they knew where they were going. I thought I had brought the necessaries—a duffle-bag containing tent for two, blanket, cook-kit, and Corona, with a lot of odds and ends and a few other things. But I had neglected a destination. In a general way Fred and I had discussed the places ahead, but we had left the exact point of ingress to inspiration. Now it looked as if the conductor would get to me ahead of the inspiration. Beginnings are notoriously difficult, whether one is tackling a continent or only a cracked egg. And I sat there hunting down the names of stations, like Sentimental Tommy seeking the right word, when the conductor arrived. Luckily his uniform had not chilled the humanity out of him, and we had a chat.

"If I was you," he said, "I 'd get off at Ste. Marguerite. There 's a golflink there, and a swell hotel on Lac Masson, just new. We 're near there now."

He pointed out the window across a prodigious horseshoe-curve with a huge up-grade at which the engine was puffing egotistically.

"They 're good ski hills," said I," but—"

"I know what you 're going to say—too sum-

mer-boarder-like. Now at Ste. Agathe, or anywheres on from there, it 's wilder. There 's lots of time to think it over. Excuse me, sir.''

He left me to expedite the Ste. Marguerites from the train, and I began thinking it over again. But the process helped me no more than it had Hamlet. We were soon passing through country that had become definitely upland, a forested plateau with here and there a lake, and near and beyond a mountain-ridge, low and bulgy but not precipitous. I longed to begin my exploration. Once more I unrolled the map. Lakes of every shape and dimension curved and wriggled across its face, each lake tagged with an alluring name —Lac Sauvage, Lac Manitou, Lac Ouareau. I had only to descend, to leave the railroad, make the plunge, and the trip would be started. With a sudden reflex of the cerebellum I gathered up my bale of household gods and bolted from the train. The station happened to be Ste. Agathe.

Now, I am sorry if all this gives a wrong impression, I am a fatalist; I prefer life à la carte. I admit that, so far, the trip had been managed with about the push and positiveness of a jelly-fish, though I defy a jelly-fish to shoulder that duffle-bag. But with my initiative drugged by disappointment it seemed quite the sensible thing to let things happen to me as they would, or until I disagreed with the way in which they were hap-

pening and should again assume management. As a matter of just due to Providence I must say that my day of events table d'hote, apparently strung on the slightest chain of chance, introduced me to the Laurentians more satisfyingly than days of the most exhausting inquiry and preparation would have done.

It was now four o'clock of a bright afternoon. The Ste. Agathians had deserted the train platform, and the little town was sinking back into its summeriness. In the center of the place there rose a hilly pasture with some pleasant cows upon it. I decided to go ruminate with them, left my duffle, and started up.

The cows had chosen an appetizing situation. At our feet lay a cottage-fringed lake on the sunset side of the hill and a neat little town on the other. It was almost a village-sized town, but it possessed a city-sized church, from which metropolitan-tongued bells began to rock the trees around us. The catholic cows, long used to such hubbubs, did not cease to chew, though I should think the cream would have curdled in their udders. The celebration went on. "Mercy!" thought I, "this is driving religion home!" and I wondered how the sensitive sick in the sanatorium on the distant hills felt about it. When the jangling stopped and sudden peace swam about us I felt almost sympathetic with the poor

nit-wit in the story, who liked to bang himself on the head with a hammer because it felt so good when he stopped.

The cows and I were enjoying an altitude of about a thousand feet, and the mountains which girdled the horizon appeared to rise that much more. The near-by sanatorium looked picturesque and as if Canada was treating her returned soldiers well. I imagined that these graceful hill-contours made the most restful sort of scenery for daily needs, and I remembered that essay of Stevenson's beginning, "By a curious irony of fate, the places to which we are sent when health deserts us are often singularly beautiful." Ste. Agathe is not singularly beautiful, exactly. But one cannot look into the outreaching valleys without visualizing the breadth and freedom of the land beyond, and that idea must be singularly beautiful to men strapped to beds. What pasts were tucked in those beds, what tales roofed by those gray tiles! As I looked down on the shining tin of the church I hoped that prayers were being said for those soldiers' peace. Such a roomy church should inspire great prayers, or else much stonework were wasted.

Since I could not hope that any one was praying for my future I opened the map to have a go at it myself. I decided to arrive at my destination scientifically by flipping a coin. It came

down King Edward! I was destined to sleep on the other, the north, side of the railroad. About the same time a gentlemen of middle age, who was looking either for four-leaf clovers or a text for a sermon, hove over the hill and began to thread his pensive way among the kine.

"Sir," I said, as sylvanly as I could, "where would you begin, if you were starting out to see the Laurentians, on the *north* side of the railroad?"

The gentleman rose handsomely to my needs. We spread the map over the hill, and on hands and knees, with the cows looking over our shoulders, reached the conclusion that Lac Archambault ought to be my starting-point. "Furthermore," continued Mr. Clifford, "I believe that the brothers Thibault, who drive a truck thither, have had some mechanical trouble this morning and have not left town. Come with me and we 'll see."

The brothers Thibault, it was true, had not left town, and it did not look as if they ever would. The Ford truck in which they conveyed groceries and passengers to St. Donat, the village on Lac Archambault, was being treated to repairs. I was introduced to Paul, who was hanging over the front with his head lost in its midst, and to Ernest, who was somewhere beneath the car. The boys assured me that they would start in an hour. I doubted it, for the car's most sensitive

parts were still strewn around the yard; but I did n't care. Now that I was equipped with a destination, nothing else mattered. So I engaged passage, and continued with Mr. Clifford to see Ste. Agathe.

"They call Ste. Agathe the Saranac Lake of Canada," he said, in reference to those hospitals, "but it is doing the place an injustice to imagine that only the sick come here. There are many beautiful lakes in the neighborhood, and wealthy Montrealers have built by them charming homes for winter as well as summer. Many skiing parties, many skating parties take place here. But since the soldiers have come we lack a large hotel."

I did not lack good food, however, because Mr. Clifford has a little inn of his own, and his genial helpfulness included a meal against my long ride into the unknown. On my way back to the repair yards I passed that bell-possessed church and saw a sight. It was a handsome, masculine-looking young priest playing tennis in his long black robes. I stopped and watched in wonderment. He had the suppleness of an aspen and the agility of a gopher. But when he served, the broad-brimmed black hat got in his way, and when he met a return his robes wrapped themselves around his legs with the effectiveness of a shroud. The evening was warm.

All this would have had an immensely anti-religious effect upon my temper, and I 'll confess I listened for some sign. But not one un-cleric word did he utter, not even when he missed an important point by six inches of skirt. He had such an honest, fine, perspiring face that I longed to ask him why he wore the robes, why he should try to serve an ace and the Kingdom of Heaven at the same time. As I left I heard a loud rending, as of a petticoat, but I did not laugh. Sincerity, somehow, is rarely funny.

Nor are the agonies of youth. Paul had emerged from the truck's belly, and I saw a boy, not yet eighteen, fine-looking despite the fact that most of his complexion was lost beneath fresh grease, smiling before me. His optimism did not falter when I asked him how soon the truck would be ready. "Quinze minutes, Monsieur. Avez-vous une cigarette?"

Two hours later we left the tool-cluttered courtyard and set forth upon our odyssey, Paul and Ernest and I. There were yet some errands the boys told me, before the final beginning of our trip. *Mon Dieu,* there were! Those errands —and may I be stricken like Ananias if I exaggerate—consisted of hoisting some bags of feed upon our rear, of arranging a mound of furniture upon the feed, of packing some bales of bread into the crevices, of calling at a tailor-shop, the post-of-

fice, and some odd shops on sundry commissions. I did not see how the invalid truck was going to wobble under this load, when, by way of flourish, we swung up in front of a hotel to pick up a family who had come down from St. Donat for a day's shopping. I was, later, to learn much about the size of French-Canadian families. A commencement of this education was now made, for out of the hotel came a slight little mother with some parcels and a baby in her arms, followed by a queue of children, a graduated series of infants, six in all, all young and infinitely grave. Paul rearranged the bread, and they defiled into the seat behind, sat down, like a Sunday-school, and we were conclusively off.

Once clear of Ste. Agathe I had scope to admire the evening. Twilight had begun to improvise some serene variations on her eternal theme, and far ahead I watched range after range of rounded mountains glow and die. The children were preternaturally quiet; but not so the truck. It coughed and choked and sputtered until my disquietude overcame the inertia of my French.

"Do you mean to say, Paul," I asked the boy, "that you are going to risk twenty-seven mountain miles in a sick truck, loaded like a moving-van, and with a nursery aboard?"

"Ah, oui!"

"But what if we 're stuck for the night?"

"Nous y arriverons," he said simply.

To have met the brothers Thibault first was the happiest possible introduction to the French of Canada. To be able to love, while laughing at, a people is surely a sound proof of their worth. And that night I was to laugh all over my body at those boys and admire them truly. Remember they had driven that horrible vehicle twenty-seven miles that morning, had operated on its insides from noon till dusk, had had an ice-cream cone apiece for supper with some cigarettes, and were now confronting those twenty-seven miles again with gaiety. You can depend upon the Saxon for his spunk, upon the Celt for his spirits.

The slopes now grew intenser, and the old boat only crawled as she neared their tops. My anticipations were covered with gooseflesh until I looked on Paul. In his face there was no feature of despair. He had a good chin, like most Canadian French, and in the dim light he made a shadow-picture of young courage that warmed the heart. It was impossible not to like him, impossible to refuse to throw in one's lot with a fellow so brave and gay. I did away with doubts and resolved to deserve the smile in Paul's eyes, resolved to live in the very immediate present.

My philosophy was soon put to proof, for as night fell we failed to make the apex of a hill. We began to slide backward. Paul guided the

leviathan skilfully hindwards to a stream, during which manœuver the woman made no sound. One prejudges French femininity as being nervous and excitable; but three centuries of Canada have calmed her. And those children were a revelation to me. They had been waiting hours for this most questionable passage; they were now being racked in a machine that came nearer being a churn than a cradle; they were getting momentarily colder. But with the exception of the one in arms they sat bolt upright like robins in a nest, offering no complaint. I was indeed in a new country.

From the gurgling brook into which we had subsided we obtained water for the radiator. Ernest did up some wires so that the lights might light; Paul leaned beneath the beast to regulate something, and not to be outdone I tried to fix the horn. Then, after re-roping some of the more active furniture, we again essayed the hill. It was a breath-paralyzing moment. If we should not make it, I foresaw the rest of the night there beside the ravening roadside, to be spent in endeavoring to keep those children warm. Ernest and I leapt and pushed. The little woman uttered no word. Paul manipulated the monster scientifically, and we topped the eminence by a chug. But it was as close as Tophet.

"Are there more like that?" I asked.

Photograph by C. Marius Barbeau.

HABITANT HOME, OLD STYLE.

"Plusieurs, Monsieur," Paul replied, smiling handsomely as he lit a cigarette.

"All right," thought I, "if you can smile, I shall, too."

It became a night to remember. We now stripped to the limits of respectability in order to keep the family from freezing to death. The Laurentian air began to lick at us with a cold tongue. From ravines long streamers of frigidity darted out at us. We passed lakes, motionless pools of vapor in the starry night, and I was conscious of mountains bulking hugely above us from time to time. And all the while we climbed. The precarious truck snorted and snooped around uphill curves until our persistent progress seemed dependent on a continuous miracle. We three on the front seat huddled together for warmth, and between remarks I pictured the career of this boy, driving his fifty miles a day through the un-garaged wilderness, from melting spring till freezing fall. At moments of cigarette lightings I could see his face, now a little paler with fatigue, but ever with the fine set of jaw, the humorous light, courage or camaraderie or what you will, in his eyes. Paul Thibault, whom I never saw again, will always live for me in those flashings of a match, a medallion on the night, a picture on the title-page of my trip, a portrait of buoyant youth, French youth, in Canada.

And now the gods let drop a syllable which was to twist my destiny into its proper path. "Voulez-vous rester au châlet?" asked Ernest.

The word "châlet" sounded hospitable. "Oui, oui," said I, as if it had been my intention for the last five years, and I had no sooner spoken than the truck, with a final rhinoceros-like lurch, scuddled into a winding, tree-arched place that looked like private grounds deposited by magic in the wilderness, and so up to a hilltop crowned with a cottage.

Immensities seemed grouped around, yawning equally below us where earth fell away and above where heaven rose. But there was no time to muse on this, for, awakened by cessation of the eccentric motion, one group of children after another lifted their voices in a part-song of grief.

"What is that?" came the not unnatural interrogation from a tent near-by.

"Un monsieur qui voyage pour regarder le pays," called Paul. An apparition in pajamas approached.

"I 'm a belated traveler hoping for a bed," I said.

"*A* bed?"

"Yes, this is not my family."

"That 's different," said Allan Barr, relievedly. "I guess we can fix you up, if you don't mind sleeping in a tent."

"A tent, a woodpile, anything that does n't have to be cranked or pushed up hill. Just show me to it."

So, with whatever doubts he may have had, he took me in. I paid a paltry sum to the chivalrous Thibaults and parted with a real regret. It is strange how much mutual understanding twenty miles of trucking can provide.

CHAPTER III

LAC ARCHAMBAULT

IF first impressions are as potent as supposed, then am I hopelessly prejudiced in favor of a certain sleeping-site on the pasture-lands of Archambault. I had gone to bed surrounded by the ambiguities of night. I woke in a canvas-filtered incandescence, parted the tent-flaps, and was confronted by such a prospect as might greet arising angels.

The threshold of my room was a garden, which led to a knolly pasture, which fell away into a forest, which stood guard about the lake. The blue and rippling waters of this secret paradise lay shadowy in receding coves or changeable with sun afar. Shimmering distances carried the sight through straits and past islands into a mountainous beyond. A great range, or rather bouquet of ranges, fifty summits at the fewest, filled the north with flowing lines and fleeting hues. A lazy cloud here and there brightened the solitary sky, informing its mere boundlessness with beauty.

Thus, at a breath, was I vouchsafed that mo-

ment of bright ecstasy which is the North's gift. The possibilities of life stood there by my tent door on that brilliant morning. I felt the primal conception of freedom. Whatever hardships might come, they could not obliterate the white branding of this exalted moment. I was stamped the North's. Should I hide in cities or in mines, the joyous uneasiness of it would find me and haunt me. As with experienced love so with this emotion is the soul forever water-marked. The revelation had been made.

From this spiritual tubbing I hastened to a very mortal breakfast, conceived and executed by no less than the chef to the Prince of Wales on his Canadian tour. It must require much self-control to be a prince for long.

During my stay in the Dominion I was to hear much of the Prince—from girls who had outnumbered other girls in the matter of dances; from soldiers on whom he had looked twice, whilst other social unfortunates had only had one nod; from hard-head-and-hearted business men who were still enthusiastic. Murray Gibbon, the novelist, in giving me a copy of "Maria Chapdelaine," mentioned that the Prince had once touched it: I prize the book.

And the reason is, I suppose, that the Canadians and I, along with the rest of the human race, are still quite young, and the symbol of great things

is still an incitement to our imaginations. I don't mind confessing to a glow at the sight of the red-coated, armed and spurred young giants of the Canadian Mounted Police; not since the days of Lancelot has a uniform stood for cleaner law or finer romance. And by the same token I am not ashamed of a leaning toward princes.

It seems a prosperous sign for the race that men can rest a moment from their interminable business while a youth, invested with the foreshadows of royalty, passes by. There is so little time for fairy-tale nowadays. It seems a joyous thing that the power which is the people should still recognize a head with homage. And it is glorious to know that there can exist a young man, fine-looking and with courage tried, straight-thinking and true-acting, who, when elevated to the peak of universal regard, can look around without growing dizzy from self-consciousness. It is a feat of personality, to cross a continent and leave a trail of radiance and good-will undiminished two years after. It is such personality that will keep sweet the world.

Men can still learn from nature. The bees are no bolshevists, but must have their royalty. Without men to look up to and admire, our drab democracies can only boil and bustle as futilely as pots upon a stove. We shall always need a symbol of prestige. The Catholic Church has its

cross, the British Empire has its crown, and the majesty of wilderness law is clothed in the compelling dignity of that mounted police uniform. My native Stars and Stripes speak of Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson, and Roosevelt rather than of the mussy levels of mankind. Our nations will be failures unless these great symbols of personality are remembered.

And so I was glad that the Prince in Canada liberated the old dreams, recalled the stately splendors past, and brought to mind new possibilities in empire rightly used. I should have loved to have seen him—youth for once crowned at the outset with attainment, enjoying life's full bloom, the stuff of which Cinderella's dreams were made. But since I was too late for that, it was something to hear the echoes of his trip, something to sit at the table decorated by his ex-steward's eggs and marmalade, enjoying simultaneously that man's anecdotes and his propensity for pleasure-giving breakfasts.

It was the Châlet St. Donat into which I had fallen, a neat cottage with a few cabin camps nestled around, blinking in the sun on the hill's broad brow. And the first person I met was the châleteer, if that is what you call the person who drives a châlet.

"This," said that vigorous enthusiast, "is the finest place on earth. I have not visited them all,

as you have, but I can still say confidently that neither the Andes nor Afghanistan can afford a view of fifty-three mountain summits from one's porch, each separate summit clothed in hard-wood that blazes like nothing you have ever witnessed in the autumn. Those mountains yonder are called the Black Mountains because there happen to be no dark conifers on them, one of the map-makers' little jokes, I suppose, and incidentally a climb you should take. There are many others, and trails, countless numbers of trails which we have already cleared and are going to perfect. You know we have been here only two years."

"Two years!" I gasped, "Only two—"

"Two only, and they were by accident. You see I was driving by this property by chance, when I saw this view, and that very moment I knew that I must own it. So I do. And now, if you are through breakfast, perhaps you would help me with your experience by advising me where to put the solarium."

My experience! I might have been a boiler-maker, for all he knew.

Thus through that stirring Sunday! The chaleteer's day of rest was spent conducting this successful resort for nature-loving citizens. On week-days he had other businesses. "Anything for motion" was his motto, and even the flowers

in the crannied wall were in danger of transplanting. With some phrase of flattery for his fulcrum, and a contagious enthusiasm for his lever, he kept us in benevolent circulation. But only when I had mentioned my errand, seeing the Laurentians, did I fully become the toy of his invincible energy. I was taken swimming by his son, walking by his guides, and motor-boating by himself. I was canoed up the Black River, a winding bit of loveliness that offered "a picture a minute" (thus coming up to the chaleteer's specifications). I was conducted to the top of a great cliff on Archambault and down again; rowed to a raspberry island lying at anchor in mid-lake, like a low green battleship which later would be freighted with blueberries. I was shown to the maple-grove hundreds of years old, some of the trunks being twelve and fifteen feet round, to the farm, the dance-hall, the village, the camp-fire. And to bed.

Even through the morrow I was delightedly kept a-going, though the master-motor had departed, which proves that the impetus of great men may live after them. The excursion was an all-day one to Lac Ouareau, a low-hilled body of water, the shape of South America, Cape Horn and all, whose Brazil elongated into a stream whence, said Jules, one could go on indefinitely into other lands. Jules was our guide. Further-

more he was *the* personage of St. Donat, game-warden, forester, farmer, trapper, fur-trader, and man about town. He had grown inured to outdoor hardships by his home-life, which was conducted in a shack so thoroughly ventilated as to make the use of its few boards seem almost negligible.

I think it was Jules's interesting inclusiveness of life-work which inveigled me into my next move, a mixed camping trip which I shall at once never forget nor repeat. It came about so smoothly that I was quite compromised before I knew it. We were eating lunch on the rocks at the entrance to Lac Ouareau, the five of us (an ingenuous, high-strung chap named Marshall Hall, an Amazon, with husband, Jules and I) and beneath the bland spell of our ham-sandwiches and coffee some one said how nice it would be to take a camping trip. I remarked that I would have to soon be on the move. Some one else ventured that we might start on the morrow. Without reflecting how risky the action was, I pulled out the map, and the trip was as good as settled on.

Now the map in question is entitled "Regions de Colonisation, Haut Gatineau, Labelle et Nord de Montréal." It was issued in 1915 and can be obtained from the *Ministère de la Colonisation des Mines et des Pêcheries, Quebec.* It is a map

that, at sight, would change anybody with the slightest taste for adventure into a wanderer. Its romantic areas of lemon-colored lands are interspersed and edged with blue and intricate lakes which lap seductive shores of mountains mauve and pink. Rivers entice one hither and thither across surfaces sown with exquisite names. I am sure that the Quebec Government, which is so anxious to procure patronage for its empty places without the attendant expenses of publicity, could do no better than to fling this map broadcast.

"Let 's go," said the Amazon; "I 've never been camping in my life."

"Neither have I," said Marshall Hall, "let 's do it."

"For days and days," continued the strong woman.

"But dear," said her husband.

"You 'll guide us, won't you, Jules?" she, interrupted, overpoweringly.

"Correc'," said Jules, which corruption comprised his English vocabulary.

"And we 'll let Mr. Book-writer choose the route," she concluded, throwing this sop to my silence, I suppose.

I know not what imp in me nodded assent—whether the cruel pleasure of watching husband follow his spouse through burn and swamp, or the unholy joy of witnessing three neophytes

take to the woods. Or perhaps it was young Hall's genuine delight in this new freedom; for it turned out that he was a dancer at the Metropolitan, let loose from pantomime for the first time into the shimmering outdoors. He looked too slight for canoe-carrying or the strain of sleepless nights; but his notice of the subtler things, the stir of the wind along the rice-grass and the shift of color down the isle-set lake, made me want to see him on the trip. And the strong lady would make such contrast, her husband such comedy! We spread the map and gazed.

Jules pointed out a string of lakes arranged by nature for this very undertaking, his enthusiasm bubbling out in French that was about as intelligible to us as so much soda-water. But we gathered that it would take three days to the end of the chain, and so, forsaking the beauties of Ouareau as one forsakes the dinner-table, we hastened back to the chalet. The Amazon spent the afternoon sewing up a skirt in lieu of trouserettes, Hall in asking me what I thought he ought to take, Jules in bagging victuals for the party. Theo, the husband, kept out of sight.

Marshall Hall's inquiries on the clothes question reminded me of my own previous agonies. Women, as some careful observer has said, dress merely to annoy one another. But men, I swear, buy clothes and put them on from an even baser

motive, the fear of seeming funny. One glance at a roomful of men in any summer city is clear proof that we have not the courage to be comfortable.

Before setting out I had spent a prodigious amount of thought (and no little violence of emotion) in planning how to avoid the ridicule of strangers. In order to be comfortable among the Indians I wanted to wear knickers and a flannel shirt; in order to be acceptable to cities I had to dress in anything but knickers and flannel. Whenever I emerged temporarily from the wilderness I must emerge also from indelicate boots. It took some planning to have dainty attire at hand to greet me at every trail's end. For the sake of those who may want to do the same thing (and at whatever cost to other people's patience), I append the fact that this scheme worked: I shipped one outfit, consisting of white shirts, bow-ties, and all the other palpable evidence of my being a gentleman, in a suit-case from pillar to post by express. The other, containing the comforts of savagery, was packed in a duffle-bag.

A duffle-bag is to the woodsman what an old-fashioned attic was to our grandmothers. Into this cylindrical carryall, eighteen inches across by forty high, one can cram everything that is needed for a year in the woods, bar food, and

still find room. It is waterproof. It can be a partial sleeping-bag. It carries easily with a tump-line.

Into this charitable vault I packed a tent of green waterproofing large enough for two, another tent of cheese-cloth for the flies, a large blanket, a cook-kit for three, an ax, a fishing-rod, a Corona typewriter, and all the delicatessima of soups and shaving-creams and such that tinge the natural comforts of the woods with luxury. With one's household under one's arm, a man feels a very prodigy of independence. Add a rubber-blanket, a rifle, and another blanket, and one is equipped, forsooth, for anything.

I shall kindly omit other details of our getting off.

Tuesday's astonished sun looked down upon as strange a launching as had probably ever disturbed the waves of Archambault. Jules had prepared an antique canoe, monstrous enough to hold the five of us and our duffle, to convey us to our first portage. On the other lakes, he assured us, there were boats. The land into which we were voyaging was his domain, and having a summer of my own planning on my hands I was glad to let three days of it to Jules. His stocky swarthiness had an air of confidence, as well it need, for he had never guided such a total of amateurishness in his life. Jules, I'll say right

here, never abated the twinkle in his eye or the little black pipe in his mouth from start to finish, despite the abnormalities of his party and their unusual ways of manifesting themselves. And right here, also, I want to say that in this book I am going to indulge myself in frankness. Mine was a halcyon summer, full of heaven, though seasoned to taste with hell; and during it I met those to love and those to laugh at. So wherefore should I coat everybody with the marshmallow paste of flattery? Why call an Amazon a butterfly? There is small use in holding the mirror up to nature if only to distort her; and I intend to hang only pictures true as I can paint in the crowded gallery of remembrance. Look close and you will see a fellowship of mellow hearts.

It was a morning of northwest breeze, blue skies, and bending birches. I was bow paddle, Jules stern, and between us was heaped, like a statuesque allegory of Plenty, the Amazon, surrounded by Husband, Hall, and an incalculable quantity of accessories. The very incongruity between the picture and my notion of a camping trip was exhilarating; fun was ahead, even if comfort lay behind with the chalet that was glimmering its last above its pasture. Behind the chalet those Montagnes Noires, still unclimbed, rose and beckoned. But I could not sigh; I had n't breath enough. For the first time in my

life I was paddling guide-wise, and it left me with a singular deficiency of wind.

All my life I had paddled a canoe; but now I was to learn how. The canoe in Canada is at once horse, foot, and trolley-car—the one vehicle of transportation. As driven by the Indian or the French-Canadian guide with quick, noiseless half-strokes instead of the long graceful pull to which my leisure-loving muscles had been trained, the canoe becomes a space-devourer. The meaty part of the usual gesture is all that is utilized and the boat goes pouring along, like water down a stream, incessantly. You cover forty, fifty, sixty miles a day if the wind be clement. And any one who imagines that the Indian is a creature who fritters away existence in a state of hopeless languor is invited to go paddling with him. He is not concerned with the poetry of motion; he is concerned with getting somewhere. And worse, he has his favorite side to paddle on and will not change. I know of nothing so constant or so tireless, short of the side-wheeler. And, until you get used to it, nothing is so tiring. Our long boat, once in motion, sped as easily as a small canoe; but it left me no wind to babble with. Not that my conversation was necessary; the Amazon was reviewing a list of relatives and friends she wished could see her thus, and Marshall was verbal with appreciation of the scene.

Husband alone brooded silently over it with apprehension.

The prospect was indeed wrought with an irregular wild beauty, sweet with solitude and sun, that penetrated one like music. White-laced waves fled toward the shore on the right where a road, visible now and then, strayed lonesomely along for the purpose of releasing men into the wilderness ahead. On the left rose mountains, flight after flight of them, spread with forest to their marching tops. All was sun, all was motion, and in spite of the countless lakes that I have looked on since, none has made an image of clearer beauty on my memory than that brilliant picture of racing Archambault. And this despite the squeaking of my muscles.

After jerking my paddle to and fro for an hour in my attempt to catch the exact rhythm of silent Jules, we passed an island, or rather a pair of islands connected by a cobbled causeway, and peopled by priests, the Fathers of the Sacrament off on their vacation. It was a relief to me to know that they took one. A black-robed young man, girt as in Biblical illustrations, was doing the wash. Another was pacing the beach, reading his fill of prayers, I suppose, from a little black book. The whole atmosphere of this sanctuary was one of pious prosperity and seemly comfort.

Suddenly my imagination was electrified; for,

as we rounded the islet, I caught sight of a great rowboat down the green distance, manned with eight priestly rowers, four to a side, with another black-robe at the tiller. It was a picture from Parkman, these dark oarsmen of the Apocalypse, bent in a somber ardor at the oars. Instantly I visualized those ages past when the cassocked, wide-hatted Jesuits obeyed the promptings of the next world and ventured forth through the ghastly wilderness of this. Here was a page from the great historian come to life. I saw, not these, but those of yesteryear setting out on their tremendous mission of baptizing a continent.

They in whom the power of reverence is not dead, should read the lives of the Jesuits who, from an almost insuperably conflicting world, carved Canada. On his vivid screen Parkman has thrown a motion picture of events that hold the schoolboy or the octogenarian. To read him is to appreciate the past, and to appreciate is to wonder at the heroic in its most unselfish guise.

Indeed, it is beyond the modern to conceive what toil, what hardships, filth and famine, insult and loneliness those educated men, who roamed the wilderness in 1636, endured. To penetrate beyond the northern fringe of civilization to-day is not to enjoy mere slothful ease. Even with trusted guides, prepared foods, maps, medicines, and other palliatives, a man rarely emerges from

the bush inflamed with luxury. Then consider the self-impelled martyrs of other days. They were surrounded by a sea of Indians with, at best, uncertain tempers. They were confronted by personal danger in every form. Their mother, France, as ever frugal, yielded them the minimum of support. Yet singly, or by twos, they threaded wildernesses still unmapped to-day, painstakingly learned languages not yet understood, and dared the frenzies of sorcerers and knaves in order to secure their souls for paradise. However moderately the modern man (whose energies are chiefly directed toward procuring conveniences for his family)—however moderately he may rate the value of those past enthusiasms, he will still have to honor the selflessness that begot them, and the courage that carried them out. One can read of others' hardships with wonderful equanimity; but to go through with them ourselves, that is another matter—or so I thought as, with slightly aching muscles, I gazed on the black-robed men of God bent on their distant course down Archambault.

CHAPTER IV

GOING TO THE DEVIL

I NOW began to pray for a portage. And this, let me tell you, is not often done. Normally Heaven is beset with prayers against portages. But I had pushed much water behind the canoe and my vitals yearned for rest. It seemed that my biceps were lamenting loudly enough to be heard by the others and commented on. But they were busy, Marshall joying aloud in his uncaged delight and being interrupted by the Amazon's ready recollections of irrelevant things. Husband was worried lest it rain.

La Corniche, a bold beautiful dim headland in the west, had been left behind, the Fathers of the Sacrament had faded to the south, the explorable little St. Michel River running from four unnamed lakes could not detain us. Like an ocean liner, we passed a shoal with a flag on it and, turning, got the wind. An Amazonian shriek dispersed the peace of things as a little wave sloshed on her. She remembered that, despite her new trousers, she was a woman and ought to be afraid. Alas, she was n't afraid but pretended that she

was, which was infinitely more fearful. On this tack the wavelets were rather sloppy, the wind was gustier, and it did seem the part of caution to run in to the village of St. Donat. Meanwhile the Amazon's feigned fears had engendered a real terror in her spouse, who began to revile canoes as such, particularly our own. I reminded him that it was the water that drowned people and not the canoe; but the distinction did not cheer him. I told him that twice I had been upset in automobiles and never from a canoe; but this only suggested the law of averages to him. Some time I should like to prove that a canoe is the safest vehicle of enjoyment we possess, far safer than the dinner-table; but now we are beaching the craft at St. Donat.

This village is an outpost, the farthest peg that civilization has driven in this direction. There was something symbolical in the direct way in which the road from the lake led to a boardwalk which led straight into the church. The white spire was more insistent than the heavens. Turn to the left for the wilderness, to the right for the saloon, but if you turn at all you do it in the face of the Church. In the backwoods villages a lost soul has no excuse. In fact one can escape salvation only by an act of will.

In St. Donat beauty lags behind religion. Some day I hope that Paul Thibault will be mayor

and plant some trees; for, with a little planning and some paint, St. Donat could be made one of the most beautiful living-places on earth. While the others ransacked the post-office, which was also Banque Pronvinciale and general store, for post-cards, I sat on the church steps for my back's sake. I have rarely enjoyed a rest so much, and I am sure my back never has. It soon ceased groaning and slandering the Laurentians, and in ten minutes every vertebra was quiet, allowing me to store away that view. The sun was at noon, high in the summer-brilliant roof of day. White clouds towered over the west. The great span of sky and the wide sweep of mountains liberated a breadth of feeling which the ordinary commotion, which we call living, cramps and obscures. My soul was thinking, or rather inspiring. I had that delicious sense of rest from labor which is worth much labor to attain; and as I sat there, drenched with sun and serenity, I blessed the Mother of Nature who had tuned my senses to such calm enjoyment before setting me on these paths of pleasantness. I felt sorry for the lack-luster lives of those who never venture a day's journey beyond the zone of walls.

Why travel? For experience' sake. The uplift of that nooning on the wind-swept hill carried me farther than a year in libraries would have done. To be sure, reading is painless, and

those who travel do often so with tears, or their equivalent in oaths. Particularly those who travel north are spared none of the mortalities. Cold and fatigue and memories of smoother days passionately remind a man that he has turned fool. But let him once win sight of his frontier, once experience the valiant openness of the North, and he knows that his has been a wise folly. The messengers of space bring him new desires of which he cannot speak, and strange satisfactions find him out on the wings of certain winds. Those who have been North will know what I would say; to the rest all explanations are but words, as meaningless as vocabularies.

We had a shocking lunch, so fly-covered and slovenly as to steel all hearts against hotels and prepare us for the outdoors with a vengeance. The elements at worst are none of our fault; but flies are inexcusable.

The wind made a division necessary. Jules and I took the canoe to the dam at the entrance to Lac Union, which is but a continuation of Archambault, whither the rest walked, and where we reëmbarked, soon to enter the Pambina River, obvious enough ahead.

And now I was to see of what stuff our diverse family was made. That lunch had taken the taste for civilization even from Husband, and the wind had blown away from us our memories

of home. Consequently when the Pambina shoaled up on us (for the spring had been almost rainless), it did not seem outrageous to bare our feet and wade the sandy bottom, towing. Madame Amazon sat her barge, like some crude Cleopatra of a land more savage than Egypt, urging her husband to severer tugging. Marshall and I gloried in our infant-like delight of wading, and Jules uttered harmless directions in pipe-French, that final mouthy disguise of the language.

It was fun, fun; and the foolishness of it was beginning to weave our dissimilar natures into a common sympathy. Laughter is the common denominator of mankind, I think. Laugh together and the league of nations will follow. I suspect the man who will not laugh with me. And I had rather he laugh at me than not at all. He often accepts this alternative, I might add.

Even Jupiter Pluv joined in and laughed from a tall cloud till his tears rained on us, and we found lucky shelter in an old saw-mill at the dam, half-way along the three miles to Lac Ouimet.

It was on the right shore of Ouimet that we saw the last house of civilization, which reminded Amazon of a second cousin to whom she had not sent a card. This entrance into the final wilds gave Marshall as much joy as Peary must have

felt in watching the North Pole take shape before him. Adventure is relative, as any one will admit who has groped about his cellar of dark nights.

Our course across Ouimet was about northwest, and we soon entered Lac Prevost River, leaving the ghastly trunks of a recent burn, and winding among the new greens of second growth. Here, without the stress of waves and sheltered from the breeze of dying afternoon, I felt that I could go on forever. My second wind had displaced all sense of moderation, as often happens on the first day out. It is possible to take things gently on the first day out; but have you ever met the man who did? The first smell of freedom, the first taste of distance, and one's intelligence is straightway overcome. An immortal fervor urges one on, although one's mortal frame, one knows, will pay for it. This thing of devouring lakes had got me, then.

The sun had come around the corner of a cloud when we surprised La Rivière Noire running from the deserted forest and its highland home. It shone in the new light there on the west, and our pleasure in meeting it made the mile from Lac Ouimet seem very short. And now we entered Lac Prevost, a narrow hill-ridged lake about two and one-half miles long. On the left, about a third of the way up, there is an old lumber-camp,

where we might have stopped. But Jules had in mind a lean-to further on; and as that appealed to Hall as more like the camping he had read of, we faltered not, arriving near the mouth of Rivière Lac Ile du Pin.

"La pêche," said Jules, and instantly the most frantic excitement prevailed. We were actually to catch our supper. To Marshall, especially, this was the acme of romance, comparable, I suppose, only to the feelings of a cave-man eating his first charlotte russe.

It was a perfect place for fish, the dark cold waters of the entering stream making mysterious places around snags. Jules tied on two flies, Marshall flicked them toward the sedgy shore, and *mon Dieu Prestissimo!* two fish with but a single thought chose their respective hooks and hanged themselves thereon. It is exciting enough to angle with a fly for the first time in your life; it is more exciting to get a rise at your first cast. But to catch twins at the first gesture is too much. It is bound to dwarf the future of your sport. It is harder to learn patience later, also. Marshall, I fancy was disappointed because only one trout responded to his second cast.

At number four the fishes unanimously sulked. Jules changed the flies, putting on toothsome concoctions which you would think would lure a fish from the furthermost horizon. But not a

fin. Whether the sun, by sinking one inch, had ended their day; or whether the dying beauties in the canoe had coded danger as they left the waters, who can know? But we had three pounds of trout, and the vast assurance of a first success.

The next half-hour bathed us in rich beauty. The little river, scarcely six yards wide, bore us through the hush of reeds and bushes, that scraped our sides now, or now opened in a pretty curve, and finally led us to its shapely source, Lac Ile du Pin. The clouds were folding their misty wings and settling, like great feathered fowl, for the night, and the last sun flooded the low shores with level light. I searched the water-edge for moose. Jules said that he had slain many on the mountain at the far end of the lake.

I pass the night, which, like all first nights out, was nearly sleepless. By morning everybody looked the hard habitant and camper, with Husband the most joyous of the crew. Life in the large was not proving half so fearful as he feared, and the charms of savagery were beginning to seep through his city-calked habits. I think he did not wash his face. In the Amazon less change was apparent; less change was necessary. She had determined to be happy from the first. A night of giggling, unsoft bed and heat—for Jules had overdone the fire—had brought no regrets, had stimulated rather her habit of expressing

passing fancies. The Amazon was cursed with memory. Marshall would be raving about the rain-wind or Arcturus or some fair distant view, when she would inject a pointless memoir about her grandmother's piano or the like. This became my chief delight. It could all be counted upon—the poetry, the piano, and the percussion. But I anticipate.

At Lac Ile du Pin we left our ark and struck out on our first portage, which runs from back of the cabin over a spur of the mountain about a mile to Lac aux Rats. The trail is plain and easy. About half-way Jules halted and led us to a cascade of the Rivière aux Rats, a lovely series of falls totaling fifty feet and milk-white in the morning sun. We found our boat at trail's end and pushed our way across the small grassy double pond, at the far end of which the trail to Lac Clair begins.

And now it seemed that an outraged heaven was raining portages on me who had dared, yesterday, to pray for one. Carrying goods in Canada is done by means of the tump-line; and as one's neck does not immediately crystallize into gutta-percha, it raises piercing objections to the barbaric treatment it is subjected to. Mine was howling behind both ears. But to understand my neck you must first understand tump-lines.

The tump is a strip of leather, two or three

inches wide, that tapers into straps cut usually about six feet long. These straps are tied around the accessories of pleasure you think necessary for your trip. Then the thing is suspended from one's brow a little above where your hair begins to part. Much as I hate the tump I have to admit that it is the most efficacious way of transporting freight through a wilderness. It beats the back-pack thrice over. The weight, you see, is distributed along the spinal column. It is adjustable by a touch of the hand. It can be thrown off easily if you are falling. It is fashioned of simplicity itself, and an Indian or seasoned French-Canadian can walk off with unbelievable weights, actually thinking little of a burden of two hundred pounds thus suspended, sometimes with a canoe to top the pile. The tump-line is the thing, and one might as well gnash one's teeth and season up. But the seasoning process is the devil. Until you are broken in, the tump method can provide more agony to a sensitive neck than is usually supposed possible outside the dentist's chair.

But now I was to find solace in another mode. Marshall had assumed, in a fit of generosity, the bread, the fishing-rods, and a kimono, which the Amazon had forgotten to pack—the whole not much for weight, but an amazing total of wickedness. The rods had not been taken

down, since Jules had said that the way was short and *bon.* Compared with later carries it was both of these, but if any one desires to visualize Marshall's manœuvers let him pitch a pack of fifteen loaves of bread across one shoulder, tuck a kimono under one arm out of mud's way, and direct through the forest two quivering rods each of which is trying to tag the passing trees. I followed, forgetting the prejudice of my neck against more torture. The tip of one rod would run up into a spruce like a kitten and hang on. Marshall would back till the bread butted into a tree. Meanwhile the other rod had snatched hold of a fir, and the kimono would slip, slip. It was all vacation to Marshall; he had the temper of a stroked terrier. This saved his sanity, which after all is the valuable part of a man, without spoiling the performance for me.

Once ferried over the Lac aux Rats we came to the trail to Lac Clair, which in a wet season must be very bad indeed, and we began a serious bit of bush-going. The way was overgrown, and we had no sooner left a marsh than we came to a mountain, which at the half-way stage supplied us with a spring of delicious water.

I would not tarry over this tour in such schoolboy fashion saying "next and next and next," if I did not believe that some day soon the riches of this territory would be utilized by many hoping

for a wilderness holiday. To find a piece of country so wild, so picturesque, so full of game and fish, and so miraculously near to Montreal was a perpetual surprise to me. It is true that almost within sight of that city, as quite within sight of Quebec and Ottawa, there are famous precincts for the sports. But all are under lease, or all the best. Yet here we were, within an hour (by 'plane) of Mount Royal itself, where the lake sands were pitted with the tracks of moose and the lakes themselves were roiled with rising fish. Doubtless, soon, some group of men will rope this region off; but until they do, it can provide the whole gamut of wilderness joys for the price of two days' journeying.

Noon and Lac Clair and lunch conspired to make us forget the two-mile past. There was a cabin by the sand and a cloud across the west; and we voted that remaining there was discreet as well as comfortable. It is remarkable what relief such a decision can give, particularly to a tumped neck. I was tired, but I did not worry on the future for that reason; for it is the surest of all forest axioms that the price of admission into the wilderness life is a period of fatigue. Always with me, the first day is glory, the second gloom. Always the first day moves to godlike music and the hours shine in uplifted arc from dawn till turning in. Then, on the second, peni-

tential groans. I task myself with interrogations: Why did I leave home? For what reason have I incurred such a life? Wherefore endure such suffering, such stiffness longer? And there are other morbid questionings. But that night I sleep well; spring waters wash the civic longings off, and I emerge on the third day from the egg of dejection a new man, callous and triumphant. Thence on, rains and fatigue and famine are as natural as night, and readily endured for morning's sake. It is easy to be redoubtable, unflinching, cheerful; or if not easy, necessary, which is the same to minds rested by the sanity of sunshine.

The Laurentians are mountains of a comfortable house-broken sort. Not one of them importunes you with peaks and pinnacles to assault. Not one confounds your senses or twists your reason with a hurly-burly grandeur. They are the kind of mountain that you like to have just beyond the garden. They are as cozy as a kitchen, often—old and magnanimous and worn with the weathers of all time. Most geologists agree that they are the oldest ranges of the globe, and even the counter-geologists, who mumble about recent infusions from below, put the period far enough back to be impressive. Certainly they wear their age as becomingly as an old lady her wrinkles. They satisfy the soul's longing for breadth and

height, and they offer her the inimitable beauty of antiquity. They soar enough to lift the spirit, yet low, too, like a pensive crow. They are full of contours that surprise and secret places that refreshed with little streams. The Laurentians are beautiful for their un-self-consciousness. They demand no praise. They offer a prospect familiar and comprehensible, and yet so vast as never to be wholly comprehended, making one's heart grateful to them past forgetting.

To Marshall and me, after a dose of Jules's tea, which was strong enough to raise the dead, it seemed suitable to climb one of the surrounding mountains in order to spy out the land. Jules unearthed an old canoe from the bushes, pointed out Bear Mountain, the chief eminence at the other end of the lake, told us to look for the trail where a "Si Vous Voyez du Feu Eteignez-le" sign was tacked to a cedar. We issued invitations to the others, but tempered ones, for I wanted Marshall to have one afternoon of forest stillness unpricked by the needles of reminiscence. Appreciation is the pay for pains, and it was worth pains to show him a beaver-sign or a bear-scratched tree because his delight was so genuine. One of the greatest pleasures of this world is initiation. To watch my Indian Fred find Shakespeare in "The Taming of the Shrew," or even to show the sweet uses of a balsam-tree to a city-dweller, is to bring

back one's own old thrill intensified. Husband had blisters, so we went alone.

May and June are the bird months of the Northern wilds. Though mid-afternoon is their quiet time, yet the reed-singers, and the flocks of chirping, whistling, warbling folk were busy. Whisky-jacks had already found our camps profitable, and terrific woodpeckers signaled to the four quarters that they were getting grubs. Ducks and sheldrakes swam before us, and a loon, sensing our virtue, did not dive. We found the sign, the blazes, and the mountain-top, which culminated in a lusty white pine, into the sides of whom we drove nails wherewith to climb. This is a necessary wrinkle in Laurentian-land, for few of the summits are bare enough for views. Nails and rope are two essentials of a woods-goer's kit.

Our tree gave us fifty feet of vantage for our view, and every foot a mile. Immediately ahead lay Lac Ours and Lac Plat, this last a trinity of ponds, while a dazzle of silver-shimmer toward the setting sun was Lac Beaulieu on the map. To the right of Beaulieu was an exquisite bit of water not on the map, which Jules calls Lac du Diable, after our Puritan method of attributing everything pleasant to the devil. A fortnight later the primeval forest lying between us and Lac du Diable was burned over, but the slopes of Bear,

and our pine, escaped. And I advise the effort up that tree; I hope the nails will hold.

Lac Taché, our terminus, was hidden behind a range or two. This immediately piqued my curiosity. From the moment I had seen the map I had conceived a desire to go to the Devil, that alluring river which flows from Taché, and follows it to the railroad. With the present party this was impossible, of course, for we had too little food and too much fat along, even had we had the proper canoes. But I determined to see Taché, to note the size and speed of the out-flowing river, to reconnoiter the place marked "Rap" (for rapid) on the map, and then either camp there in lonely delight till Jules got his party home and returned to me, or else come back at some later season of more water.

A sense of the forest had now permeated Marshall. It is interesting to watch the forest seize a man as ivy-tendrils grasp a wall. The city-dweller carries his conversation, like his white collars, with him. For the first day or so he strides along the trails as if he were still tapping the pavements, rehashing the latest abuses in politics or rents. But the touch of the great woods is insidious; fingers of moss lay hold of him, bushes entwine him, and the plumy tips of pine-trees brush his moods until, lo, he begins to steal

softly through the ferns, to speak in hushed tones of unfading things. So Marshall; as we descended from blaze to blaze of that green solitude which was as the Lord had made it, in the period when He was calling all things good, my companion forgot the kinks and concerns of his profession and let the fingers of the forest erase trouble from his soul. It was pleasant, too, to think that Jules would have supper waiting.

And such a supper! Please let me register that meal. The perfect meal consists of food and talk and situation. Conceive, then, a halo of smiling faces surrounding a frying-pan of smirking trout, the whole framed in the last glow of May's tenderest afternoon. Behind us the small cabin offered security, behind that the woods; and before, the coves and capes of Clair.

The Amazon was in the seventh heaven, whence she descended only at forgivably rare intervals to recall a cousin. Only once did we have the piano. That was when Marshall, in seraphic periods, was extolling the views from Bear.

"The landscape to the north," he was saying, "extended for miles and miles, one shade of blue after another giving way to lavender and rose, making a picture no mor—"

"Dear," said Amazon, "if we *only* had our baby-grand!"

Marshall bit his lip: "—making a picture no mortal could describe."

But it was a happy meal, Husband being the happiest of all. For he it was, apparently, who had suggested the fishing in our absence. He had paddled the Amazon around while she pulled eight-inch trout from the crystal depths of Clair. They had stopped at thirty, not because the fish were tired but because the anglers were. Marshall was so inflamed by the conversation that he set forth, as soon as fed, and even though it was the hour when only rash or most ingenuous fish will rise, he came back with a good string. And the next morning, too, the trout, showing more willingness than wit, attached themselves wantonly to our lines. Having in mind to bide me at Tachè, I tried my hand at smoking a few dry; but the result was vague, to put it kindly.

Now the Amazon was to prove her namesake stuff, and I cannot over-eulogize the pluck and spirits of that woman; for we had been given a night of comfort merely to emphasize the succeeding aggravations. The ardors of the trip really began when we took trail for Lac Plat at the same place where we had commenced our mountain climb of the day before. Only the most unusual courtesy could have called our route a

trail, for everything that can happen to trails, bar being swallowed up by earthquakes, had happened to this one. The wind had selected the trees with blazes for those to overthrow. Sometimes we would have to climb bristling heaps of them. Bushes had made free with the open spaces, and rocks had apparently sprung up along the way, for I cannot imagine the original trail-maker having chosen such to climb over. Jules led with a huge pack that contained the groceries and the kitchen-utensils; then Marshall with cameras, bread, and fish; Husband bearing his blanket and the Amazon's; she with a light miscellany; and I with my summer's outfit and the rest of the blankets. My yet uncalloused neck began to whimper, to protest, to shoot arrows of fire into the region I am pleased to call my brain. I stopped to readjust things, lost ground and observed the Amazon bumping along out of sight. The trail was so faint that it was necessary to keep together; so I rose too hurriedly and sank into a private little marsh concealed behind a log. To be wet was to be slippery. I called; they did not hear. The Amazon, I supposed, was reminiscing. I longed for somebody's life; anybody's would do; but preferably that fool's who had suggested the trip. Who was the first idiot, anyway, who had promulgated the theory that camp-life is one amazing

sequence of immortal bliss? I thought of those ladies at the châlet who had seen us off, with "Oh, how lovely! how *heavenly* it must be in the *real* wilderness!"

Quite warm now, I got up and sloshed on through the morass to the next fallen tree. A permanent toothache had settled in my neck, and an enduring hatred in my heart. The bushes had ceased to quiver ahead where the others had lately passed. What would they say if I, the only old-stager in the crowd, should hold the party up by being lost? Well, let them answer to the coroner; it was their fault. If I were going to be lost, I might as well be comfortable: I would rest. And I was just going to, when Nature anticipated me by looping a cedar-root across my foot. Without at all slackening my pace I pitched forward on my head, the load slipped peaceably off, and there we all lay, duffle-bag, Nature, and I, on the oozy ground.

It is but a stumble from the sublimest self-pity to plain common sense. I had to laugh; and as I guffawed there in my wallow, all enmity for things ebbed from me. The cool ministry of trees regave me strength, and I decided to catch up with them. I had not gone fifty yards before I almost bumped into the Amazon.

"I turned my ankle," she said, "and thought I 'd rest. Were you resting too?"

"Oh, no!" I said, "I was only watching two bear-cubs up a tree."

"You wicked man! Why did n't you call us?"

"I did," I replied truthfully, "but you would n't hear. Is your ankle bad?"

Luckily it was n't.

Jules, being a good guide, had now missed us and come back, and passing Lac Ours and Lac Petit Ours (about a mile beyond Lac Clair), our party trailed painfully on through swamp and thicket. It was nearly three before we reached a wind-torn birch-bark lean-to on Lac Plat. Fatherly Jules had set them to chewing spruce-gum in lieu of lunch, and with hot tea the buoyancy came back; but those three miles from Clair to Plat had put their stamp upon us. We were now veterans all, united in fatigue and bound by bruises. Amazon was now sister-mother to us three, Husband no longer tenderfoot. Common hardship is the father of fraternity; and those now-humorous troubles of that trail had bonded us four dissimilars into a happy clan.

Furthermore, the labors just endured had stretched our ambition, and when Jules murmured something about *une cabane* on Lac Beaulieu, but two miles further, the tea boiled in our blood and we were all for pushing on.

Lac Plat, which is a pretty ornament, a pendant trinity of silver ponds thrown carelessly on

the Laurentian bosom, is strung together on a silent stream. Jules keeps a dugout canoe, a hollowed log, braced by two smaller logs for buoyancy, on Plat; and as Marshall and I with most of the furniture were creeping from the second channel in this we saw our first moose, a young bull and a cow. Conversely, we were their first humans, so neither party moved. The only sign of disapproval on the bull's part was some irritated hair which rose along his neck. They looked at us, then grazed along the shore, and we, hoping to secure the spectacle for the others, paddled quietly away. The sight of game is the most pulse-quickening of all the wood-gods' gifts. The ever-underlying wild in us vibrates to the wild so visible in them. Their crashings or their softest footfalls startle up some echo in our ageless past. "I have seen a moose," Marshall kept saying all that afternoon, and the remark never seemed superfluous. His happiness was more innocent and real than if he had hit upon a silver mine.

Of the two miles to Lac Beaulieu, of a threatening cloud which flung twilight in our faces, of our horrid surprise in finding that Jules's *cabane* was an impossible mile farther on; of our endeavors to make roosts for ourselves by the shore, and of the meal executed and consumed after the shades of night had fallen with some intensity on our

wilderness—of these pictures, only the titles. Jules is a good guide, but not a great one. Fred is great, an artist of his craft, and the difference between the two was to be shown to astonished me, later, in more desperate situations. For the present I was content; besides, spring nights are short.

The next morning I broke the news of my desire to follow down the Devil's River, and of my plan for waiting in the wilderness till Jules should return with a good canoe. A week there, with a trout rod for my friend and a note-book for my thoughts, seemed very heaven. As usual, there was much criticism of heaven. I should die, I should hurt myself, I should perish of loneliness or starvation or the measles.

Why is it, I want to ask very seriously, that a grown man is not supposed to know his own desires? I can conceive that his desires may be impracticable or objectionable to others; but why is it that not the results of his desires but the desires themselves are questioned? Once, on the *Lusitania,* I fancied making a meal solely on cream-toast. I had to argue with friends and waiters for it. Had I expressed a desire for lobster *à la Popocatapetl,* everybody would have fallen over themselves to see that I got it. But cream-toast! It was plain that I did not know what I wanted. The same with afternoon tea. I

detest afternoon tea, and yet I like to sit and talk with people. But let me suggest that I sit and talk while they sip tea, and the hubbub begins.

"Do have some cinnamon toast."

"Thanks, I don't think so, now."

"Then try a chicken-sandwich."

"Thank you, I don't care for anything."

"But, just a *little* one!"

In such a case a man's word means nothing, *nothing;* and if he succeeds in out-arguing them it is only luck and not because they really believe he has spoken frankly. I am beginning to believe that the simpler a man's tastes the more different he appears from the rest, and hence in their eyes the more foolish.

So was it on that beach of Beaulieu. They could not believe that I spoke my heart. But Providence was on my side.

CHAPTER V

FROM TACHÉ TO TREMBLANT

LAC BEAULIEU, the farthest of that arc of lakes begun by Archambault, is, after Archambault, the loveliest, the loneliest, and the most haunted by wild beasts that we had seen. A beach of white sand sloped to the unstirring waters, and in the sand were unnumbered footprints of moose and deer, of fox and bird. Jules pointed out the print of a large dog where dog was impossible and said *le loup*, but I was skeptical, in hopes of further proof. Triumphantly the guide tossed up with his toe a large lump of matted hair, deer's hair rolled in the stomach of a beast of prey, and I then believed *le loup*. For a moment I wondered whether my secret intention of residing for a week by Lac Beaulieu were not as indiscreet as Amazon would fain make me believe. Certainly a man who is counting on his three-score years and ten does not care to contemplate being wolfed down at half that age by a pack of brutes. On the other hand that wolf-track was a delicate challenge; and when I crossed

a brook and found a beaver-stick, gnawed of bark, it decided me. I would stay.

This announcement corroborated the opinion of me that had been slowly growing in Amazon's and Husband's minds. They rated me half-way between unintelligent and imbecile, say imbeciligent. Marshall (to whom thanks) defended my whim, and offered to help make camp for me on the lake, while Jules and I explored a route to Taché. But Providence, resuming control of my operations, prompted me to settle at once on Taché in order to explore that region during Jules's absence. By ten of the morning I had made my adieus. Any of the ancient martyrs, en route to the lions, could not have been in worse plight, in the party's mind, and they made their farewells correspondingly affecting. I, who had never spent a week in real wilderness alone, with nothing to do but mosey around and watch the menagerie, kept wondering why I had never thought of it before. This new-sprung joy discounted somewhat the very real disinclination one has to any parting. Good-byes between wilderness friends are always made with sincere regrets. Cain and Abel, Nero and the Christians, man and his mortal enemy, meeting before camp-fires would find out the large reserves of good in one another and sigh to let each other go. My last glimpse of my co-explorers was this: Marshall

doing some steps from Schererezade on the sandy floor, an ember in each hand, typical, I hope, of sorrow; Husband, rod-in-hand, waiting till his spouse was ready to mount boat; and the goodly Amazon, probably the first white woman on that far beach, expressing her large amity in frantic waving. I salute her pluck and generosity.

Nobody can realize the joy of walking through the wilderness unencumbered until he has tumped a pack along for days. Jules now wore the duffle-bag. He also bore his pipe and an anxious expression. This last was because he had told me that he knew the trail to Taché, an old *chemin de chasseur*. It must have been very old, or else mislaid years ago. Certainly the trails I have associated with never looked like that.

Canoeing, as a clever man once said, is done by walking incredible distances through the woods and carrying the canoe on the shoulders. Unfortunately the canoe-trip which looks so plausible on the map, beginning at the tip of Archambault and ending down the Devil's River, meets this mean carry between Beaulieu and Lac Taché. The distance is perhaps four miles, the terrain hilly, the condition horrent. Yet, with some cutting, it can be done. I pictured poor Jules's struggle a week hence with his canoe, but I did not make my commiseration vocal. That is a poor thing to do in the bush. Don't ask your

guides to do more than they are ready to attempt, but once under way don't drench them with pity. A self-pitying man anywhere is pitiable indeed; but in the bush such sentiment is perilous. Let your justice be rigorous, your foresight keen, but for sweetness' sake hold the softer sentiments in abeyance. I know of one trip ruined by a lady's mollycoddling of the guides. The French-Canadian, and even more the Indian, has been raised in such a different physical environment from ours that common factors are difficult to find. A guide of sixty will portage for miles a load the very sight of which would crush the ordinary broker. Yet ask the guide to sign his name, and he is disturbed to tears. Give your men good food and the right amount, which is not hard to gage; appreciate their work without betraying that you think it Herculean; keep early hours, and take your hardships cheerfully, and you will have your men's respect and good-will. There lies the trip's success.

Providence never does things by halves. Either the stars seem to be stepping from their courses for the very purpose of circumventing you, or else the Fates obviously lay aside all other work to assist. This time Providence determined to outdo itself, and at that very moment was arranging the roads of two other English-speaking persons and mine so that, at the appropriate minute,

they might intersect. In three hours the slight and vanishing lines which marked our passages through the wilderness would collide. When such collision happens in Broadway it means snarls and two irate individuals backing off. But when it happens in the privacy of one's wilderness it may mean sudden friendship. In this case this was so, and Providence did me a prodigious favor, certainly, when it instigated the Wheelers to stop for lunch on the virgin shores of Lac Taché.

As if to give my reunion with the English tongue the last fillip of fitness, Jules had sunk into a sweaty silence. Jules, at best, considered conversation one of the superfluities of life. And since my French was collegiate, and therefore non-usable, I could scarcely egg him into musing aloud. I dimly remembered some of the things it was ungrammatical to say, but those that one could employ on the Rue de Rivoli without blushing escaped me. "Oui, Madame," or "Malheureusement" was about all that remained to me from "Hernani" and "Le Cid," and when every word that I intended to use in a forthcoming sentence had to be dragged up from the well of class-room memory with a mental windlass, you can see that conversation from my end was not an idle amusement. And, worst, when I had carefully collected a remark and uttered it, Jules

hotograph by Walter Rutherford.

INDIAN TRAPPER'S HUT, LAC AUX RATS.

would reply with an anemic "Oui, Monsieur." So I soon came to consider persistence as merely vainglorious, and we both subsided into deep personal silences.

It was an unaccommodating region—one in which just another lake could have been fitted in handily. Nature's theory of lakes in Canada seems to have been to place some wherever they can be set down on the landscape without overlapping. As a consequence they are, in most places, enormously plentiful. Canadian farmers count their lakes as Americans their chickens. He is land-poor, indeed, who owns no water. You can lease a dozen lakes in Quebec for the price of an extra bath-room in New York. One's annual plumbing bill would give you fifty. But on this particular height of land between Beaulieu and Taché there were none. There was a pretty brook, however, falling in the right direction, and we followed it till the bush-leaves glimmered white ahead, the silver of sunstruck waters spread before us, and we came out on the sands of Lac Taché. And there, not twenty yards away, was a canoe drawn on the beach, a fire, and two men with their backs to us, sitting on a log. As we approached, sweet syllables of English fell upon my ear. They heard and turned.

"Please don't stop talking," I said; "it sounds good."

They smiled, arose, shook hands; and Providence's job was accomplished.

I soon discovered that the gentlemen to whom I had been conducted, as by a magic wand, were princes of the country. Had I combed the Province I could not have come across two others more appropriately designed for this encounter. They were not only authorities on this section of the Laurentians, both by residence and affinity; they were also cordial from the heart—and head. Now this means much to the wayfarer. Mere residence, as any traveler knows, subscribes nothing to a person's usefulness for information. It is the dwellers on the Appian Way who do not give a hoot about the Cæsars. And eke with most villagers about their villages. Most men have a very misty knowledge about their own neighborhood, which becomes less than apathetic surmise as to what lies beyond. Not so the Wheelers.

George Wheeler, an American Protestant of culture, had settled in this land a generation ago and, by that mysterious affection for his place of residence which one calls affinity, had made it his own. In those days the region was the country of Indians and lumber-jacks and priests, all Catholic and, save the priests, uncultured. Despite the differences of nationality, of religion, and of outlook on life, Mr. Wheeler became a

force in the countryside, probably because true cordiality has a way of its own. And I found that I had run upon a man looked up to by all classes of people. Needless to say I did not find this from his own lips or by his own lunch-fire.

While Jules and I were being plied with trout and tea, a magnanimous idea was being spitted before the Wheeler heart; and when it was done to a turn, he served it, to this effect: that I complete the trip down the Devil's River with his son Tom, while he return in my place with Jules the Silent. I longed to gush acceptance, for such a plan would eliminate the toilsome carry from Lac Beaulieu, the expense of a fortnight of Jules, and would give me expert guidance by the Devil's rapids. I made a hasty if beggarly effort to convince my conscience that I was exchanging Roland for Oliver. But my conscience is n't such a fool.

"Lac Archambault is very lovely, but," I began lamely.

"I have always wanted to go there; would you have me renounce a chance?" said he, gamely.

"It 's a chance," I said darkly. "I suppose you know that the gods have just served you on a silver platter to me."

"Bon repas!" He said, smiling, "and—au revoir. We'll meet at Gray Rocks Inn at our mutual convenience."

"Gray Rocks Inn?" I queried of Tom when the two had gone.

"Dad's hotel," said he. "You see, dad started bringing a few city-people up into these woods," and the son went on to tell me about his father's struggles to establish himself in a rough country without losing the touch of civilizing gentleness necessary to a real success. Tom, who was in his twenties, seemed to be a barbarian after my own heart, a man who preferred the straightforwardness of country life to the incoherencies of cities, who found his joy in a fairly simple genuineness, in dealing with the pretty stark fundamentals of existence about him rather than in pasting the gimcracks of life, as recommended by others, upon a surface existence. We got on the topic civilization.

"Yes, I like the orchestra, I enjoy New York, and dancing and all that," he said, "but I think perhaps a man can be best civilized in a place like this. Civilization gets top-heavy down there, proud-headed and rotten-hearted. What 's your notion of civilization?"

"The best of everything, including men."

"I get you; good music, good morals, and good sense."

"Which includes good health. A genius with a cold in his head, a fresco painter who can't fry eggs, a subway sweeper who thinks the sky

is brick—that's our civilization of to-day. If we could only show them this."

Tom had been paddling me around a point of Lac Taché to the outlet where we proposed to stop for the night. The lake, fir-skirted and low-shored, lay motionless in the down-blaze of brilliant, harmless sun. From the woods stole warm perfumes of steaming balsam; a jay made zigzags of noisy blue along the shore. May was sitting on the knees of summer. It was Nirvana to lie in the bow and be paddled by a fellow, whose sun-browned, aristocratic features had been molded by a sensitive, clean nature into a face fine to look upon. After that long plodding behind pipe-besotted Jules, such laziness, such company, was deep enjoyment. I mentioned the laziness.

"It is funny that puritans always feel that idleness is pagan."

"One has that sneaking feeling."

"But it implies a certain stinginess. Certainly the soul that feels assured of an eternity ahead won't begrudge one afternoon of folded hands."

It developed that there were two routes home: a direct down-river paddle which included rapids, a five-mile portage, then a series of lakes to a place called Keepover, whence we could drive to Lac Ouimet, (another Ouimet,) on which stood Gray Rocks Inn. Or, a longer circuitous route

by lakes and carries into Lac Tremblant, on which rises Mont Tremblant, the highest of the Laurentians.

"I 'm game," said Tom, when I had pointed the antennæ of my desires at the longer way. "This is my last real liberty till autumn. Dad 'll beat us home; but he won't worry."

So we pitched camp at a point on the Devil's River where a little rapid began to chuckle and play with itself. And my contented consciousness kept giving thanks for the present company and comparing the easy intercourse we had been having with what might have been, had all the beauty of things been shut in my heart by the taciturnity of Jules. To that able but unimaginative guide a primrose was but a primrose (if that) and a trout but a piece of fish. To Tom a trout was a fount of reminiscence, and a primrose the starting-point for many thoughts. Lacking primroses we had balsam, and as we lay, smoking in unparalleled comfort after supper before a little fire, we heated our wondering brain-cells with fevers of speculation till late into the night. With morning came business.

A little below our camp-site the young river made amends to its impatient nature by sluicing through some narrows in a comfortable rapid. Luckily my new friend had the river by heart, and after telling me what to look out for we started

down. The core of my job was merely to interpose a paddle between us and destruction whenever necessary: at least that is what it seemed like at first. In reality Tom saw to it that there was no danger, and I soon came to enjoy the fascination of pouring by submerged rocks on the smooth, slender tongues of water. Later, in really bad water, I was to shoot vicious miles of agitated white, but as a passenger; and those times lacked the beguiling charm of that first short rapid of the Devil's.

It is curious that our esteemed race should always choose the most thought-provoking or most attractive locality to christen after the devil. Later I was to learn from the lips of a poet the why of this particular naming. But to my eyes that morning the leafy vistas of La Rivière du Diable and its quick-running waters seemed paradisal to me.

It would be a recital barren of pleasure to the reader, the tale of our next two days. Alas! nobody wants to read of perfect days. Had I broken a leg on the carries, or had Tom been drowned, I could write confidently. For it is not the halcyon moments, but the hellish, that give satisfaction, and hell seemed singularly remote from those precincts du Diable. Hence, since our voyage was not alleviated by a single disaster, I shall foreshorten it into a paragraph.

La Rivière du Diable affords the main waterway into the virgin wilderness lying between the great body of the western Laurentians and the equally immense area drained by the St. Maurice. It is the easiest connecting stream from the railroad at St. Jovite to the headwaters of the Mattawin, that rough but only route from this region eastward. Doubtless the vanished Huron hunters used it as a short cut; and for long to come it will be the only highway, winding, arduous, provoking, and impracticable in places. Until fire devastates it this river will be auspiciously beautiful for those whose errand is life and liberty and the pursuit of paradise. The Devil is best employed by them who know him well; and as you value your life do not attempt the Mattawin without guides. This country is no village green.

We ran the river for an hour, if my memory is not weakening, and then, by a portage none can find, crossed to another stream which was to bring us to Grand Caché Lake. (Caché is not a misprint for Taché.) But before Caché comes Crooked Lake. The portage, downstream, brings you in at its northeast end. Relatives and friends traveling the other way can find the portage by the fire-sign on a tree.

Crooked Lake is an experiment on the part of the Creator to see how peculiarly a body of

water can be shaped and still have it a lake. This one consists of two lobes, irregularly curving like cow's horns, each horn about two miles long, the distance between tips only two hundred yards. This could be carried if one were in a hurry; we were not.

At the foot of the lake, at the other horn-tip, rather, we came upon an inlet into Graham Lake and our first deer at the same time. She was lazily browsing about and switching that long tail, the length of which is always surprising to me. (I must once have had a nurse who lied about deer's tails.) There was probably a fawn back in the bush. We did n't bother her, and she contented herself with one hop over the first-line alders to snort and stare.

From Graham Lake there was a portage of, I hate to say it, four and a half miles. But the trail was good and we did it in two hours. I say this, not in self-praise but in humility, for Tom fairly hogged the canoe. At one's first glimpse of him, tall and rather light, one would never have gaged the wiriness underlying his flannel shirt, or have guessed the steeliness possible to those blue eyes. But to see Tom before some palpable barrier was to see determination in action. A portage like that is the test of a man, both before and after taking. Then we had two miles of good paddling down the west branch of the little Caché

River with sights of sheldrakes and their young, scrabbling along in fright. We thought we saw an otter.

We were now, I believe, getting into private territory, and men desiring to take this route should inquire at the Riordon office, either in Montreal or St. Jovite, for a permit through. My friend was persona grata in this region, so I did not have to bother hereabouts. But in canoeing through Canada one should look up carefully the ownership of the territory to be crossed. Sometimes a lumber company has leased the limits and you will be barred in mid-career; too many sportsmen have left fires. Sometimes a fishing and hunting club has leased the rights, and the guardians are instructed to shoo off and, if they aren't shooable, arrest travelers on their territory. Most clubs are gracious enough to grant permission across their lands if arrangements are made beforehand. Information as to ownership can be had from Quebec if you allow time. Address the Department of Fisheries.

Big Caché Lake, a fine bit of water about two miles long, was followed by a portage of a mile into Little Caché Lake; going the other way you find the portage at the lake's end toward the left. Little Caché was not quite a mile; and then came a two-mile portage around some unshootable

rapids into the Caché River and down that, two miles, into Lac Tremblant.

It was the end of our second day. Tom said, "We 've got a little camp five miles down the shore there, or we can camp on that island; what do you say?"

A strong southwest breeze blew warmly up the lake; the sun was falling behind a splendid wall of mountain; my portaging and paddling muscles were deploring further exercise. "What island?" I said to temporize, hoping that he would hear them deplore.

"Down there a mile, with the sandy point stretching out. It 's called Commandant's Isle, because, until a few years ago old Chief Commandant, an Algonquin, and the last Indian living on Lac Tremblant had a shanty there."

"By all means let 's sleep there," I hurried to say; "we may get haunted."

"The whole lake is haunted. The Indians called that mountain yonder the Mountain of the Dread Manitou. Mr. Lighthall, who has a summer home on the western shore there, has written a poem about it."

"What sort of a poem?"

"The sort you like to read."

And so it happened that we camped there, on which sandy beach was to transpire one of the

fortuitous, happy meetings of my summer—, not with Commandant's ghost, for all that Mr. Lighthall says:

> Each night returning to your cedared isle
> I see your fire upon the Sandy Point—
> The stick-supported pot, the shadowy lodge,
> The deer-skin soaking by the shore, the gleam
> Of trout, the ghostly smoke, and round the glow,
> The ruddy, black-haired children, turned to you
> Their other sun—and you recounting lore.

From that same Sandy Point we yielded to the clear invitation of the water, stripped and swam; and dressing, Tom recited a few more lines of "The Land of Manitou":

> The Manitou-Ewitchi rules the wilds.
> He watches ever, and when evil men
> Infringe the great laws of the wilderness
> The Long Range trembles.

But Mont Tremblant was very calm that evening; nor did we infringe the laws of Manitou. Indeed if we ever merged with the spirit of nature it was then. The cool, caressing water closed over our bodies as gently as the heavens met over our heads, and with as many tintings from the ebbing day.

Not to be outdone in the matter of quoting, I repeated to Tom a quatrain by my friend, Adin Ballou:

Poetry is ever-present Beauty speaking,
Waking dream-echoes as such magic can
When all the loveliness of earth goes seeking
A voice within a man.

Within an hour a man, whom the loveliness of earth had not sought in vain, sat down with us at twilight's feast.

CHAPTER VI

A GREAT MAN UNAWARES

THE meeting was another one of those dramatic collisions which made my summer so fruitful. His entrance was not dramatic, I suppose, for we had long been watching his canoe creep lazily along the edge of dusk; and when, in answer to our hail, he beached the boat with an easy stroke, you could not say he had collided with anything. Yet the tall, broad-shouldered, big-nosed, open-countenanced man who lifted one moccasin-shod foot out of the canoe, and then the other, deliberately, not ungracefully, and joined us was, of all men not only in Quebec but in Canada, the most appropriate to that spot and hour. And so I call it a dramatic collision.

One would suppose that interesting meetings, the thrilling encounters which electrify the normal dusk of a man's musings like a bolt of many-rivered lightning, would occur chiefly in cities. But for me they have most often happened at the four corners of the earth—on steamers, on moun-

tain-sides, beside the still waters of the wilderness. Perhaps in towns one is likely to discard the easy affability that makes for acquaintanceship, and to don a distant mien. The more of a mob, the more distant the mien, until in a subway jam one is actually hemispheres away from the next man. Certainly men make haste to meet where Pan assures them of an honest comrade. Tents have no vestibules, and tenters keep no butlers. We did not ask our visitor for his card.

"Your cook-fire made such a contented-looking picture against the dark," he was saying; "you don't mind if I sit and watch you two?"

He was as quiet as the night at first, drank our tea without talk, and seemed contented just to be in the picture—tiny fire, encroaching dark, and three voyageurs gathered in from space almost as the wind gathers, for a moment, a few fallen leaves into some garden-corner. From his reticence he might have been a shanty-man, but the firelight disclosed a face of sensibility as well as strength; from his hair, a soft and errant shagginess, he might have been poet or musician; but then his modesty! We should have thought him fifty, but for a certain shy magnetism that goes with youth. Sprawled there along the sand in an unperturbed silence, smokng, he piqued us to the brink of interrogation.

At length the chores were done, a drift-log thrown on the fire and ourselves upon the sand, whence, after chattering on shoes and sealing-wax, the calm beauty of the night drew us off-shore from the shoals of conversation to ships and the deeps beyond. Tom and I had been congratulating ourselves (since we despaired of drawing him into the talk) on our ways of life, his in his Laurentians, mine in my Adirondacks, and both of us in touch with civilization by mail and messenger, yet also steeped in the flow of nature.

"I was afraid that familiarity would bring blindness," said I, "that the more I was with my mountains the less I would look at them. But I find that the longer I live with them the more I see."

"Yes, yes," interrupted the stranger, for the first time with eagerness, "and the reason is—the reason is, I believe, because mountains and mole-hills and the other sights of nature are but loopholes through which one gets a sight of the eternal."

"As the flower in the crannied wall showed it to Tennyson?" said Tom.

"Yes, and to dispel your friend's fear let me say that I have found to dip into nature is like dipping from a well that is inexhaustible. Those

who draw from her sweet waters most lavishly are most sure of being sustained and refreshed."

"That is what Dad says," Tom remarked. "To draw from that well is to keep sound."

"And it is only the timorous and mean and calculating who ever imagine that the magic springs can run dry."

There was a fine eagerness now about our visitor, which had its effect on us. I wondered who this extraordinary wanderer could be.

"Would you say the same about us, about men?" asked Tom.

"Yes, certainly. I would say equally that it is only the timorous and mean and calculating who can fancy that there are narrow limits to human possibilities, who dare say that the race cannot improve. But you must live with abandon to realize it."

Just then a mosquito bit my ankle. "That is right, Tom," I said; "take a hint from your native insects, who live with abandon, and see how successful and untimorous they are."

"You 're abandoned," said Tom.

"I 'll admit it," I said, "for I 'll bet that living under a full head of joy, enthusiasm, love for things, or whatever you choose to call it is what this gentleman means by abandon. Mosquitoes do it, and trees, and solar systems, and so do the

men with whom it is a pleasure to be. A sort of regulated abandon is my notion of the rational life."

"Just so," acceded the stranger. "Abandon means fervor, ecstasy, enchantment of the mind, fascination of the will, enravishment of the senses, vital generosity, recklessness of spirit, fearlessness of intell—"

"Wait, please, a moment," gasped Tom; "my breath's gone. If you lived like that you 'd burn up; you'd last about as long as a shooting-star, though I admit as prettily."

"There are middle realms, my friend. I am not arguing for license. I am speaking of a sort of ferment which should be in the blood. Without it work is drudgery, the day a burden, and all life becomes infected with a sullen discontent, which makes happiness forever impossible. I 'm not advocating a perpetual rapture, which is impossible too."

"How do you get that way?" asked my honest partner, smiling.

"Are you not that way?" asked the stranger gently in return. "If you were not I could not have spoken. I don't carry my pulpit with me as a rule."

Indeed he was no pulpiteer, rather the leonine scholar-lover of the scene. His shaggy head and flannel shirt added a certain invincibility to the

oracle, as if the voice of Delphi in him had caught its inspiration from the fields.

"Don't misunderstand me," he continued; "abandon is merely the free and unrestrained yielding of one's self at any given moment to the best promptings of the instinct, the reason, and the spirit. As I was coming along you happened to yield to it long enough to quote poetry, which, for a young fellow, is to act with the maximum abandon. Quoting poetry between males is almost never done."

"Me?" said Tom. "Poetry?"

"Well, verse," and the stranger chuckled. "Mind, I don't hold it against you. In fact it attracted me in."

"I could remember only four lines," said Tom:

"Beyond the sweeping meadows
The looming mountains rise,
Like battlements of dreamland
Against the brooding skies.

"I wish I knew how it goes on."

"I think I know how it goes on," said our guest:

"In every wooded valley
The buds are breaking through,
As though the heart of all things
No languor ever knew."

"There is an ecstasy in the heart of all things,"

I said. "Do you know who wrote the poem?"

"One of your Canadian poets, a fellow I knew in my youth," replied the stranger in a low voice. "He 's done better than that, but I can't say many of his things—or his name."

"I 'm not a Canadian and have n't the faintest idea who is Canada's greatest poet. Tell me," I begged.

The stranger shifted in the sand with a grunt. Tom re-lit his pipe and kicked the fire together. The sudden light glanced along the big frame of the lounging guest, revealed his large patient features, and darted into humorous shining eyes. He made a funny little gesture, saying:

"I can't lecture. Don't bring that disaster on yourselves. But I have a cousin down in New Brunswick you may have heard of, Charles G. D. Roberts. Now there 's a poet for you, a man who is at his best on a big theme in nature, and worth quoting at times like this, if one has the memory. I have n't; but I know the conclusion of his sonnet 'The Flight of the Geese.'" And he recited, drawlingly but with true feeling:

"High through the drenched and hollow night their wings
Beat northward hard on winter's trail. The sound
Of their confused and solemn voices borne
Athwart the dark to their long Arctic morn

Comes with a sanction and an awe profound,
A boding of unknown, foreshadowed things."

"Roberts knew," said Tom quietly.

"Which is why he is memorable," murmured the leonine scholar. "He didn't write about nightingales but about the frogs and alder-bushes underneath his New Brunswick nose. And it was the same with all that crowd of his day, Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott, W. W. Campbell, Frederick George Scott. Canadians in those days lived close to nature perforce. There was little music and no theater, at least down home, and one had an eye on the subject. To see, to feel, to say it with elation, that is the poet's task. Read Roberts' 'Solitary Woodsman' and you get a true picture transmitted into poetry by the very fact that truth is beauty."

"You left one name from the list," said Tom. "Isn't Bliss Carman a Canadian?"

"Yes, but one of the wanderers, the wapiti, and little known."

"I did 'nt realize he was a Canadian," I said, "though everybody knows his name."

"His name, perhaps," said the other dryly, "but his work, hardly. That is what counts. I can scarcely recall a dozen poems by him, and I am interested in poetry."

"There 's one that the soldiers liked," said

Tom, "a great poem for going into battle. I learned it training."

"Which?" very low indeed.

"I 'll say it:

"Lord of my heart's elation,
Spirit of things unseen,
Be thou my aspiration,
Consuming and serene.

"Bear up, bear out, bear onward,
This mortal self alone,
To selfhood or oblivion,
Incredibly thine own.

"As the foam-heads are loosened
And blown along the sea,
Or sink and merge forever
In that which bids them be,

"I, too, must climb in wonder
Uplift at thy command.
Be one with my frail fellows
Beneath the wind's strong hand,

"A fleet and shadowy column
Of dust and mountain rain,
To walk the earth a moment
And be dissolved again.

"Be Thou my exaltation
Or fortitude of mien,
Lord of the world's elation,
Thou breath of things unseen!"

The eloquence of silence followed. The spirit

of things unseen was all about, on the clouded lake and in the dim summer sky, but most of all was imminent about us three. I recalled the Bible verse: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I." It did not occur to me to remember that, an hour before, this provocative guest of ours had not existed for us; that only two days ago the slim imaginative youth who had just shown us a corner of his soul had joined hands in friendship with me. We had all glimpsed that hint of eternity in the moment, the hint which nature is forever trying to give, the hint which profound poetry like that does give.

But Tom sighed. "If life is so frail, so temporary a thing, I wonder what 's the reason in living it?"

I looked at him with added interest, and an answer came to me. "There are some lives that show what manliness can mean. And that is enough reason for living, is it not, at least until the whole race sees and catches up to them?"

"Yes, yes," assented the stranger, "reason enough. The race is puny yet. It needs much schooling, a continuous example. Even with such as Confucius, Christ, and St. Francis we progress with a lamentable slowness, perhaps because our teachers dwell too much on the virtues of innocence and abstinence instead of on life's joy. The virtue of a man is the strength of his es-

sential spirit, and the only test for the virtue of his heart is joy. Those who dwell in the dominion of joy ask no reason for living there; they live."

"Joy is more than enjoyment, then?" queried Tom.

"Yes, yes," eagerly. "You two fellows have enjoyed to-day, for you have drunk in the loveliness of the world. But to enhance that loveliness is more joyful still; to create it, the most joy of all. To create some little bit of beauty, to serve goodness by some act of kindness, to enlarge the world of sympathy and love, to help questing spirits find encouragement to hope—these make for joy, lasting and invincible. Pleasure depends on material things, but joy on the things of the spirit. It is not a relative thing as pleasure is, but a positive condition of the spirit regardless of surroundings. Joy must be forever a part of man's ideal. And it behooves all those who would perpetuate the sacred fire of life to nurture through all hazards its glowing core of happiness."

"There should be no gloomy poets, then," said I.

"Nor professors," said our guest.

"Nor people," said Tom.

"But," and the leonine one showed his mental teeth," do not confuse such joy with soft ease

and the superficial contentments of ignorance. It were as superficial as Pollyanna to believe that there are no dark secrets. Such joy is often linked with tears, yet is sturdily happy in the face of death. Happiness, I think, is not so much a reward as a proof of worth. There are grim truths, of course, but there are not any gloomy truths; or at least if there are, they are but half-truths, truths in the process of being clarified. Every prophet has felt as your Carman says in a quatrain I remember:

> "O Earth, with all thy transport,
> How comes it life should seem
> A shadow in the moonlight,
> A murmur in a dream?"

"There is one sure recourse," I suggested.

"You mean nature?" asked Tom.

"He means nature," said our stranger with a calm finality; "and you, with me, have found that recourse sure, have n't you? Or have you lived in this glory of forest and lake so long that you have never known what it is to grow anxious and harried with distractions in the house, to step out into the sunlight and find that your anxieties were artificial? In New York I have been crowded and hustled and irritated to the point of physical desperation. But a return to nature is a return to good nature. And more than that; an evening like this washes away all sorrow if you will but

let it. I do recall, now, another poem of Carman's. It 's about the return to our birthright, nature. You fellows, or the fire, are to blame for all this; but you 're in for it now," and in his calm, fire-gazing way he repeated:

"When I have lifted up my heart to thee
Thou hast ever hearkened and drawn near,
And bowed thy shining face down close over me
Till I could hear thee as the hill-flowers hear.

"When I have cried to thee in lonely need,
Being but a child of thine bereft and wrung,
Then all the rivers in the hills gave heed
And the great hill-winds in thy holy tongue—

"That ancient incommunicable speech
The April stars and autumn sunsets know—
Soothed me and calmed me with solace beyond reach
Of human ken, mysterious and slow."

At that moment of quiet under the heart of night, I thought I had never heard lines more tender or stately or significant than these, given with the slow, grave utterance of our unknown friend. What they said assured sanctuary to men pursued by life if they were true; and we, on that little fire-lit isle of friendship surrounded by the wilderness, knew that they were true.

"I 'd give a hand to meet that man Carman," exclaimed Tom.

"He 's not much to meet," said our friend, "a shy and awkward old bachelor who confines his conversation mostly to the business of the day. I know him, or did when we were younger, and still occasionally get glimpses of him. He 's a whimsical, pondering sort of giant, New Brunswick born, but forced to hunt his bread in the States. He was starting off from Montreal the other day on a lecture tour, and vowing when he got it over that he 'd never go again where he could n't go in moccasins."

"I heard that he made a living writing advertisements," said Tom, "advertising road-stuffs or some such thing."

"Advertising beauty does n't always support a man."

"Even the cannibals of the South Seas knew enough to support their prophets," I said, "I should think that Canada—"

"Who is to decide as to who are the authoritative prophets?" asked our guest. "It is n't bad for a poet to go through the fire unless—unless it kills him inopportunely, like poor Keats. It tries his creed and knits his logic closer."

"Was Carman soured by it?"

"O God, no!" shot back the stranger. "No man of his age is worth the name if he allows himself to sour, or even lack certitude, in the face of

the immortal vision. One stanza I remember sums it up:

> "O foolish ones, put by your care!
> Where wants are many joys are few;
> For at the wilding springs of peace
> God keeps an open house for you."

"What an exquisite name for the wilderness," thought I, "God's open house."

"Will you write that down for me?" asked Tom. "Dad's idea in building up our place on this lake was something like that. I never heard it put better." And he handed the man a piece of torn sugar-bag and a pencil-end.

For hours, I suppose, we talked. Once our guest said that he was trying to remember something and wrote for fifteen minutes on envelopes and things from every pocket while Tom and I built up the fire. Probably dawn would have found us still talking, for we had got on the enchanted topic, woman. Tom had said, "I can't imagine being thirty and unmarried."

"Don't try to," said our friend sharply "I—," when what he was about to say was interrupted by the bow of a canoe penetrating the disc of light and a young fellow's voice saying, "Jove, Uncle, is that you?"

It evidently was from the jump that he gave.

"Good Lord! What have I been doing! It 's midnight!" and like a schoolboy discovered truant he brushed the sand from him, saying, "I 'll be right there, Lighthall," and to us, "I 'll blame you two for this—this interesting evening," and with a firm, benediction-like grasp of the hand he had climbed into the boat and they pushed off.

"I 've been looking everywhere," I heard the fellow say, "and mother was sure that you were either drowned or lost."

"So I was," came the strong slow voice, "lost by the still waters." And they vanished.

We poked at the fire in silence, each thinking of this strange visitation, the rugged, kindly man lounging on the sands, his serene, exalted talk, his funny exit.

"Lost by the still waters," repeated Tom. "If that man is n't a poet he ought to be. He has all the feelings."

"And the words."

"And the philosophy."

"And the hair."

"Do you suppose he has the taste for spiritual toil that goes with being a poet?" asked Tom. "He looked so lazy."

"And yet, look!" and I smoothed out the dropped sugar-bag which was all scribbled over with variants of some verse.

"Yes, look," said Tom, "there 's more of it." We bent over some letter-paper also scribbled over.

"And *look!*" I cried excitedly, pointing to the letter-head:

BLISS CARMAN
New Canaan
Conn.

"By Jove, man," exclaimed Tom, "we 've been entertaining the greatest man in Canada!"

"Unawares," said I, looking regretfully at the hollow in the sand.

CHAPTER VII

MONT TREMBLANT

DAWN had got tired of poking her fingers into our eyes and had set to work roasting us out of bed before we finally woke sufficiently to roll from the balsam to the bath. The world was a-splash with sunshine, and our lake lapped us in white flame as we thrashed about informally in it. Some day some glorious barbarian, like Glazounow, will write "The Morning of a Faun" conceived in racing melody and orchestrated in transparent fire, which will bring back to me the feelings of that plunge. To spatter diamonds and drip fire, to lie in silk so bottomless and breathe air so soft, to riffle the mirrored mountains and watch them form again, and to note the muscle-play of my companion—these were good. Poor old civilization in tight clothes! If it only could forget its simper, Greece might yet be re-created before our eyes. Certainly there is a lilt of freedom about congenial nakedness that bathers in bathing-suits cannot know.

Bacchus now winked out of the coffee-pot and

beckoned us to breakfast. Then we remembered our poet and read for the first time the lines written on crumpled paper, unentitled, but certainly a beautiful summing up of his admonition of joy to us of the night before:

> The starry midnight whispers
> As I muse before the fire
> On the ashes of ambition
> And the embers of desire.
>
> Life has no other logic
> And Time no other creed
> Than: "I for joy will follow,
> Where thou for love dost lead."

"What a pledge to one's inspiration!" said Tom. "'I for joy will follow, where thou for love dost lead.'"

"It surely is the whole duty of an artist, the whole satisfaction of a Christian, the sum of wisdom."

"The loveliness of earth, when she went seeking a voice within a man, as your Ballou says, didn't go far wrong when she found Bliss Carman," said Tom, echoing my thought.

It was the first of June, the opening of the fly season, and the last day of Tom's respite from duty as assistant host at Gray Rocks Inn. The drought, which was to scourge Canada all sum-

mer, was well under way, and a haze had settled in the songless air, but we determined to climb Mont Tremblant.

In Tremblant the Laurentians of this part of Canada do the best they can, which as mountains go, is n't much, the summit being only 1713 feet above the lake, 2474 feet above the sea. In two other remote localities the Laurentians rise higher, the Gaspé altitudes reaching 4000 feet, and certain promontories of Ungava 6000. A man thinking of the Laurentians as mountains comes to contemn them. But if he rightfully considers the Laurentians as his wild garden, the ever-varying hills which make a setting for a thousand lakes, then his imagination gives reasons to its impatient relative, the mind, and the Laurentians stand redeemed before him.

The trail up Tremblant begins at the southeast corner of the lake from the fish hatchery and can be followed by any one with the most moderate intelligence to the top without faltering. Part way up it crosses an open space sown with huge rocks, and it jumps a brook or two; it never agitates the courage with cliffs to be scaled or precipices passed. And a wooden scaffold enables you to get the view.

Tom and I, uninfected with the usual frenzy of haste, made the ascent in about an hour and a quarter, having taken time to follow up and ad-

mire some of the young partridges which were to make us many meals that autumn. Owing to a scarcity of sleet-storms and a very dry spring, the partridges of 1921 were spread through the Canadian wilderness in very comfortable numbers. That is, on an ordinary five-mile walk one would see five coveys, and the mother bird had her claws full, I reckon, to bring up the families that were hatched unto her.

It is a handsome bird, the ruffled grouse, and one that will afford any amount of fun, as I was to find later, when my Montagnais friend and I tried after them with nooses, and when Alice and Sally-gay, my indefatigable pals of the St. Maurice, assisted me in a revolver attack upon them. But those day were to come; sufficient now was the view spread out to us around the Trembling Mountain.

It was a lucky thing to be up there with Tom. He had participated in most of the scenery. Lac Tremblant, into whose wooded shores the water cut with silver scythes, lay seven miles long beneath us. To Tom each island, each cove, each cape was posted with memories. He told me of a ski trip in a blizzard, of moon-lit nights noisy with owls. He showed me horizons toward the Height of Land whither he and his father went on exploration, and drew routes with his forefingers beyond the Devil's River that would lure

the most besotted man from laziness. He pointed out Moose Hollow, where the great animals made their yards and wintered, a hollow so rounded and so deep as to appear a bowl which Manitou himself could not drain in several gulps. "And thank God," said Tom, "there 's no way to get the excellent timber out."

As I sit back now and close out the too-much-with-us world, I recall vividly three things from that scaffold-hour: the lake spread like a close Milky Way across the unbroken forest; the long flanks of Tremblant falling in groundless clouds of green into the hazy distance; and the woods-lover beside me, his shirt open at the throat, his steel-blue eyes roaming the plowlands near his home, the distant lakes, and the all-circling forest. I often wonder if there is more of the miser in me than in other men; for sometimes a sharp pain cuts my heart when I realize the prodigality of life that sentences hands, once grasped, never more to grasp, acquaintanceships made to be forgotten like a passing wind. These make living straws, I suppose, with which the soul warms its nest, these touched hands and accepted hearts. But what when the soul takes wing?

From the mountain-top to a brook shielded from the sun by giant spruce was a fifteen minutes' run, and there we thought to have lunch. But we reckoned without our hosts—of flies. The cool

wind of the last few days had tempered the appetites of these early-summer pests; now had come the heat and they ate to make up for lost nourishment. I calculated that I could not swallow lunch fast enough to equalize the emptying process which all the little winged conduits around me were carrying on. The flies had come; and now, therefore, I must come to the subject of flies, a subject interesting, inevitable, but exceedingly—ticklish. For it is so hard to hit the happy mean. It is so very hard to warn the new-comer sufficiently and not scare him out of Canada. To brush the subject over is to do injustice to the flies; and to over-emphasize their presence is to bring down the wrath of Canada upon my head.

My only refuge is the truth, and you shall have it, naked.

The truth about the flies in the Canadian woods is this: During June and July, with possibly parts of May and August, according to the warmth and wetness of the season, there *are* flies in the bush. The man who blinks this fact and goes unprepared is destined for inevitable woe. But he who arms himself wisely can endure them with ease, if not with enthusiasm.

I was almost scared out of my summer by a chance meeting with some friends in Montreal who had learned of my woods itinerary. "Going *now!*" said they, "Why, man, you 'll be

poisoned." "The noise 'll drive you crazy." "Take it from us, you don't know what you 're getting into." "Sometimes even the shanty-men have to come out, in a bad season." These were only some of the remarks. But my duffle was ready and I had said the word and hated to about face just for a pack of mosquitoes. So I started, though not too confident that, poisoned and a lunatic, I would not be carried out to the nearest Canadian asylum. Yet I was n't, and not because I have any superior talent for enduring mosquitos. I have n't. I would rather live with a murderer any day than with a mosquito. Yet I would not hesitate to risk them again, *with the same outfit.* As for the flies, with foresight they are made innocuous.

It is the habit, assumed as a privilege I suppose, of every woods-going person who puts finger to paper, to proclaim his outfit from the tree-tops. Sometimes it is amusing, when some enthusiastic ego shoots darts of irony at the dens of barbarism in which all other campers dwell. His collection of pails and victuals is so fervently correct, his hearers' so preposterously wrong. But even then it pays to listen, for where there is enthusiasm there usually is some sense. I find it pays to listen to them all; then cull what seems reasonable and try it out.

The three great weapons which I culled were

these: a bottle of citronella and castor-oil, mixed fifty-fifty, for walking or fishing; a smudge for cooking or camp-making; and a cheese-cloth tent. The smudge of course was an old Adirondack friend; so was the citronella, which hitherto I had mixed with sweet-oil, a more lovely but less lasting combination. The various other liniments offered by progressive druggists are, at the best, good for nothing.

The tent was a novelty to me, as advised in Stewart Edward White's "The Forest," which is the most poetic and yet horse-sensical book that the red gods of the North Country have yet inspired. He must be thin-blooded indeed who can read one page of it and not hear the forest calling to him. At the same time it is a perfect text-book for the life. My indebtedness to the flannel-shirted artist who wrote it goes far beyond cheese-cloth tents. Just at present, however, we must stay inside the tent. I made it the same size as my forester, without opening, the seams reinforced with braid, and with loops at every corner. The length enabled it to trail enough upon the ground, and thus one was hermitically sealed, isolated, cleft from the tiniest, busiest bug in an oasis of comfort. My particular summer was so dry that the cheese-cloth tent was the only shelter needed and it was paradise obtained at the lowest price recorded.

A man's day in the woods falls into three parts: travel, meals, and sleep. The important third is sleep. After a sound night one can face anything in the way of portages and other impediments to bliss. And the way to sleep well in the woods is to wrap warm, lie soft and insectlessly. Camping is fun because it is such a personal matter, because it is an art. To an artist I suppose advice is unwarranted; but on my brother neophytes I humbly urge cheese-cloth tents for Canadian June.

It was an ingenious devil that worked out the flies' daily calendar for them—ingenious and economical. There is n't an hour of the twenty-four which has n't been allotted to one of the five species rampant. During the midday heat the sand-fly and deer-fly are the pests in evidence. The others are resting. If patience be a virtue then the deer-fly is more virtuous than many Christians I have known. He will come at you time and again with the sort of swoop that makes you shudder. He looks big enough to bruise you; and the powerful insect can saw out a piece of flesh if you let him. But he does n't come in swarms, nor after dark. I can't love the deer-fly, but I can accept him as a sporting proposition. Not so the mean but variable little sand-fly. He 's a nuisance, but not prevalent everywhere.

About mid-afternoon the black fly arrives. His

trick is to alight on your neck, run up to your cap or behind your ear, and suck till full. When he goes he leaves the spigot running. A man looks like a striped tiger, after an afternoon of them, from the streams of dried blood across his countenance. But the black-fly does n't bicker or hum and might have his bit of blood and no questions asked if he did n't come in such numbers. On the bad days, however, a man is submerged in a ferment of flying, alighting, crawling, biting, bleeding bugs; and it is too much. The citronella-castor fails; head-nets stifle you; life darkens and—but with dusk they are gone.

By then, the no-see-em, called by the Canuck "brûle," is a-wing. This bird, which is invisible, is the demon's last word in efficiency. It can penetrate the meshes of one's socks, bite until one's flesh rises in angry mounds, pepper one's scalp with fire, and strike terror into the hardiest soul. If all this can be done by a creature, crowds of whom could revel on the point of a needle, what might not a herd of, say, bat-sized brûles accomplish. No, Nature has treated us indulgently; and it is not fair to criticize such foibles as her no-see-ems. Besides, by dark they too have given place to the mosquito.

Since the days when Cleopatra employed a special slave to brush mosquitos from her shapely ankles, vocabularies have been ransacked

for words stinging and venomous enough to call the thing. No one has found the word. There is a curious relief in definitely terming something you dislike something else; call a man a pig, and your exasperation is mollified. But call a mosquito by whatever epithet you choose and your sense of injury remains unassuaged. People with unpracticable tempers should not visit the woods in mosquito-time, for there are few places whose beauty or restfulness is not tempered by this creature's presence. By day it is merely a more or less persistent pest; but at night it becomes a portent whose buzz is so infinitely worse than its bite that one lies in a simmer of continuous apprehension and prays to be bitten and have it over with. At intervals, timed just to prevent one from falling into total unconsciousness, the appointed insect soars from the blackness, swoops in a crescendo of rueful music, eddies about your head, and then is off again. "Next time will do," says he. If the night be warm the procession is fairly continuous, and the dark magnifies the noise into a nocturnal uproar.

But at dawn, that is by 3 A. M., the real agony begins. By then the mosquitos have inflamed themselves into a frenzy of activity, the no-see-ems re-awake, the black-flies return, and the period designed for repose is devoted to an eccentric contest between a sleep-sodden man and a cloud

of enthusiastic insects. The alternatives are either smothering in a blanket or slapping out of it. At such a time a man can do horrible violence to the noble qualities he has been storing up since childhood.

The above is an unexaggerated picture, but a picture of one who has renounced all preparations. Had he built a smudge on either side of him to light at dawn, had he spent three dollars and as many hours making a cheese-cloth tent, the scene would have been this: you are engaged in restful slumber on a bed of balsam. Above you, a cloud of cheese-cloth, and not of mosquitos, is waving in the light air. Outside, to be sure, they are still conscientiously trying the surface of the structure, snapping at it now and then in famished desperation, but in vain. The breeze as it comes through is automatically filtered of all flies. And if you chance to open your eyes, it is only to drop off again to slumber in that deepest of all satisfactions, peace in the very jaws of danger.

I have said my say on flies. They exist; but their clamorous energies are chiefly wanton sound. They are the wilderness-lover's friends in the last reality, for they, more than heat or cold, rapids or mountains, danger, famine, or great distances, are winged guardians of the heavy-fruited treasure of the North. Allah save them!

CHAPTER VIII

INFORMATION ONLY

THE days which followed at Gray Rocks Inn did for me what the Arab's tent did for that chilly camel—made me at home and contented, at no matter what inconvenience to the proprietor. I met the Daniel Boone of that neighborhood,

> "Moise Fleurant, voyageur,
> Good companion, raconteur,
> Children's hero, dean of guides,
> Famous through the Laurentides!
> Moise of the hundred bears,
> Curious baits and cunning snares,
> Plum-tree planter in wild spaces. . . . "

The rest of Mr. Lighthall's appreciation of this simple, fascinating man can be found in his "The Land of Manitou." Next door, in a little clearing scooped out of the bush, sat John Boyd, the biographer, receiving congratulations on his "Cartier" and contemplating "Laurier," the greatest French-Canadian of them all, the one man who has been able to make these two races, sitting so

incompatibly in each other's laps, smile at one another. It is a heart-warming thing to me, the sight of big literature springing from the soil, that ancestral source of truth. I am sure that Mr. Boyd's chapters will be none the less scholarly on account of the southwest wind, that jumps from Lac Ouimet upon his little porch, disturbing his garnered memoranda.

Pleasant as were the Gray Rocks days, I soon learned to look forward to the evenings when Tom and his father, and usually some hunter or prospector, would foregather in the den and I could hear the quintessential gossip of the North. Meanwhile I plied the precinct with questions concerning my future travels, and learned of more places that ought to be visited than I could get around to in a dozen years.

I am now going to give away a happy secret: in the same vein as those revivalists who advise living each day as if it were one's last, I urge you to visit a country as if you were about to write a book on it. Even superficially it pays. Nothing stimulates the natives, from hotel-men to hack-drivers, to so much gratuitous interest in one. And, internally, the harvest is correspondingly richer. Landscapes, that would have bored you, now possess a comparative interest; historic sights, which would have been gulped down unfeelingly, now are masticated with an eye to

future consumption. Your eyes bulge in search of the palpable truths; your ears are distended to catch the distinctive note; queer corners are the quarry; and hardships are part of the game. You leave the land, not as a stranger who has rubbed its surface, but as one who has shared, for a while, its inmost consciousness. And the writing of notes is a help. They need not all be for books, but could be used to make one's letters seem astute, or even to replenish the pages of a journal. Most people have not thought a thought until they have put it into words; and having gone that far— I abominate advice; all that I started to say was that having a motive need not make a pedant of a man, while on the contrary it does supply him with motive-power. Without my avowed reason for pressing on I am sure that I should never have surmounted the unaccommodating facts which now reared their heads in my way, should never have experienced the tempers and triumphs which were to turn the barren bush into a memorable pleasure-land.

My immediate job was to find out where to send myself. A letter from Fred showed that his future was shrouded in a legal haze and that our meeting was problematical for a month at least. I looked at the map, until I was dizzy with nomenclature, trying to decipher a route that would enable me to join the St. Maurice River from my

present situation on the Mont Laurier line. And at my most desperate moment Mr. Wheeler introduced me to Walter Abyberg of the Riordon Co. at St. Jovite. This was luck of the purest quality. Mr. Abyberg, a strong and handsome Swiss, beside whom, I fancy William Tell would have looked somewhat puny, had ranged for years the great area of forest and water which involved every possible avenue to the St. Maurice watershed. For a solid two hours this obliging giant spread map after map before my intoxicated eyes and recited the advantages and portages of route after route.

The first, from St. Jovite itself by way of the Devil's River and down the Mattawin, was impracticable because of the difficulties on the Mattawin, a rough, impetuous stream.

The second involved taking train to Mont Laurier and then a fairly hard trip of two to three weeks across to the Transcontinental. This is as follows: Drive from Mont Laurier to Tepanee River, in half a day; then up the river to the Forks, two and one-half days, portage to Fork Lake, on left; two little lakes; Big Dog Lake; Little Dog Lake; big portage to Windigo; portage three and one-half miles to Mejomangoos Lake, which is thirty miles long; there is an Indian Church, left, above island; portage to Duck Lake; then numerous little lakes, to northeast

branch of Gatineau River, and on to Gatico station of the Transcontinental. The water was already so low, and this trip looked so difficult, expensive, and lonesome for one, that I was not greatly tempted. My object was not to hunt out the daring, individual stunts; rather to find the easy, practicable ways of seeing the Laurentians, information about which might be of some use, not to the abnormal rich, but to those with, say, professional purses, who might care to poke here and there into the hinterlands. A cross-country trip with two guides like that would cost from ten to fifteen dollars a day and involve paying the guides' return time. I asked amiable Mr. Abyberg what next he had to show.

He suggested canoeing down the waters of the Lièvre to the Ottawa, from Mont Laurier, a two or three days' trip; or of taking a motor at Mont Laurier to Maniwaki, on the other branch of the C. P. R., thence down the Gatineau by canoe to the Ottawa, or by train to Ottawa, whence I could get into "real country," the famous regions of Temiskaming and Abitibi. I felt the good railroad's pass nudging me in my hip-pocket. By merely saying Temiskaming to the conductor I could be magic-carpeted there in two days. I felt my pulse. Mr. Abyberg was saying, "You get off the train at Temiskaming and take the boat for Ville Marie, then drive to Gillies Bay on Lac

des Quinze. That is a beautiful lake, full of fish, full of moose. Then to Lac Obikoba and the Lonely River." (Pulse reaches eighty at the name.) Then to Lac Obasatika, Lac Dasserat, the Kanasuta River, du Parquet, the Abitibi River, and the Whitefish River to La Sarre station on the Transcontinental. Beautiful wilderness all the way. You won't meet a soul." (Pulse ninety-five.) "Or, if you want a more direct route, go from Lac des Quinze and Lac Barrière to Lac Kekeko. Oh, the moose that I 've seen there! And wild ducks! Yes, all the smaller game, beaver, otter, mink. The Indians trap it in the winter. Sure, they 'll talk to you; some of them have picked up a little French at the posts." (Pulse here passes one hundred.) "Sure, it 's virgin territority. Then by Lac Kinojevis—the word means crooked—north to Rush Lake, by the river again to Duck Lake, and from then on you have dead water to the Villemontel River. Go down that eleven miles to the road, and four miles to the railroad. See—" and he showed me the route on the map of the Abitibi region traversed by the Transcontinental (published by the Department of Lands and Forests of the Province of Quebec, January 4, 1911).

The pass was now jumping around in my pocket and my heart in its bosom, when my Motive

Photograph by Walter Rutherford.

DEEP IN THE BUSH.

reached up and twitched my ear. "You set out to do the Laurentians," it said sternly.

"Is that region mountainous?" I asked Mr. Abyberg. He said that it was n't.

"In that case," pursued my Motive, "you have no business there; go east, young man."

"In which case, Mr. Abyberg," I said, "I think I 'd better stick to the real Laurentians, north of Quebec City, say."

"But the wildness, the easy rivers, the fishing that 's never been touched!"

"North of Quebec for you, sir," said the Motive in both ears at once.

"I can't hear you, Mr. Abyberg," I said.

"The moose there!" he appeared to shout; "they 'll be standing in the rivers now. And the bear!"

"Quebec, Quebec, Quebec, Que—" screeched that infernal Motive.

"Oh, hell!" I said, in extremity. "Why did I ever begin it? Fifty thousand lakes, forty thousand rivers, each with a more beautiful name than the last, calling me to come and catch fish in them; moose parading the shores, bears scratching down the trees, big-horned owls sitting in the branches; river-life; wilderness-life to be seen and to become intimate with, Indians to be met, their squaws befriended, the young girls to go a-paddling with, and with the young fellows perhaps

plan a winter hunt—what agonies of decision lay on the pink and purple visage of that map! There lay ten thousand destinations, and I had nowhere to go!

I could not thank Mr. Abyberg enough at the time, nor now sufficiently in print for his courtesy and kindness. His morning's labor opened to my mind vistas which I only hope may remain as they are until Motive and I can visit them with clear consciences. As matters stood I turned my back on Abitibi—my back once more laden with the duffle-bag—and resumed the less thrilling occupation of finishing up the vicinity.

North of the Mont Tremblant region, through which the quadrilateral backbone of the Laurentian highland reaches eastward for 150 miles, the country declines in altitude and interest—at least near the railroad. The landscape, burned over at intervals, flattens out—not enough to provide good farming, but sufficiently to lessen its hold on the imagination. It is like the let-down from being in an active thunder-gust to sitting in a mere rain. This comparison is taken from life, mine, and the date it occurred to me was the evening of my arrival in Nominingue. If I seem to underrate the value of my visit to that town I hope that the Nominingуans will consider the circumstances: I had parted from the Wheelers with much regret. Night had fallen, and it is a brutish

business arriving in a strange place in the dark. But with the night, fell also a rain, beginning with some sort of electrical good spirits, that wore off, however, as the storm approached Nominingue. There it, and I, simply descended. The station platform, a parallelogram bounded by deep mud, was entombed in darkness. I fell off it in the vicinity of the one vehicle apparent through the downpour, and scrambled in. This coach was open to the elements, which now began to collect in it, along with several unhappy travelers. I thought of Chopin's nocturnes, and wondered why he had limited himself to the one mood. Here was a variant from moon-lit gardens, musk-roses, and lone souls torn with passion. At least our passion was different. There we sat, bent, like caryatids meant to carry off the rain, outdoing each other in the fury of our silence. Presently the driver, having concluded some conversation, climbed in and started us on a drive such as I trust I shall never be intrepid enough to risk again. For the man, suddenly realizing that it was raining, whipped up his horse—or horses, it was too dark to see which—and we began to surge along the streets of Nominingue. In the dark they looked as wide as the streets of Petrograd, and they were much deeper. The rain changed to mud. Once we went into such a hole that I thought we were foundering. But

finally we sluiced around a corner and arrived at the Hotel Victoria, so named, I suppose, to emphasize its era. It is a poor traveler who cannot accept the conditions, but it is a poor fool who repeats them. I scraped off the mud and went to bed. So this was exploration!

Nominingue, by day, was but little better, the mere parody of a place where human beings might be supposed to live hopefully and heartily. And yet what a situation! On one hand Lac Nominingue, stretching wide to intangible shores, lifted one's imagination swiftly from the near-by hovels into the eternal heavens. A point of land ran far out into the lake's blue waters, its green headland jeweled by a Jesuit resort. I wandered along the shore, wondering why the lovelier the scene the more poor-spirited its inhabitants, when I met a gentleman taking the air in pajamas. A profusion of hair obscured the bumps on his head, but I trust there was one betokening veracity, for he began at once quoting the sizes of fish that he had caught. They were so preposterous as to ruffle even my gullible mind. One gray trout had tipped the scales or broken them, (I forget which), at twenty-five pounds; and he had caught a muskalonge in these valuable waters measuring thirty-seven inches around the stomach. It was seventy-six inches long, and weighed seventy-four pounds. Twelve years before a

judge had taken a trout weighing thirty-eight pounds. I listened to him, as I used to listen to the habitants' wives numbering their offspring; that is, stupefied, but with tact.

The people of Nominingue, fish or no fish, live only a few removes from paradise, as I discovered by climbing some of the little hills and walking around little Nominingue to the beach village of Belle Rive. The entire region is adorned with lakes. The country is rolling and, in part, forested, and land is still cheap. Here is a place, near home, where one could enjoy frontier-life. By good luck I mentioned this to the Godard brothers, discreet, earnest, enthusiastic Nomininguans, and what they said about the countryside made me greedy to go into the hotel business, if only from the vain motive of showing that fresh paint, roachless rooms, and food prepared without flies and grease could attract the dollar from its civic haunts. I want to thank the Godards for attentions tendered. Some day they will offer Nominingue to the world, I believe, a painted and comfortable center to their corner of the land.

From Belle Rive, whose lakeside inn offered fare which I fell on with enthusiasm, while sitting to a view of a broad blue expanse of water, I journeyed to Mont Laurier at the rails' end. To Mont Laurier come drummers, men who would

buy wood, and those intending to venture wildernessward by the Rivière du Lièvre. Two weeks' travel to the northeast the shiny girdle of the Transcontinental momentarily interrupts the endlessness of forest. The leaping waters of the river were eloquent of days of poling, days of paddling, nights in camp. As they raced by, the rapids shouted explanations of what I should miss if I neglected that wild route north by Tapini. Had Fred been free, had the Provincial Government thought well of my expedition and lent a hand, had the wilderness been as inexpensive as the Ritz, then I could have listened to those beautiful pleadings of the Lièvre, have linked Mont Laurier to the St. Maurice. As it was, I, with all the feelings of a dumb deserted alley-dog, turned my back on the green shores of that marvelous forest-sea, and not at all like Columbus, ordered a rig to Maniwaki.

The vastness of Canada is inconceivable; the bush is monstrous. How vast, how monstrous, I was beginning to find out. I could have spent years visiting the lakes that drain into the Gatineau, that little river, the scene of a thousand lumber-jack exploits, which snakes its way from Maniwaki to Ottawa. But the call of Roberval, of Lac St. Jean, of the habitant homes along the Saguenay, was in my ears. So I did little more than take off my hat to the be-

wildering variety of loveliness that lies to the north of Ottawa.

Those whose lot is cast in Ottawa seem to me fortunate indeed. Theirs, I believe, is the neatest, snuggest, cleanest little city that clings to our planet; a city whose prices do not suck at the purse, a city planned for the convenience of its citizens instead of the tram companies, and situated where to look up is to see trees and mountains and a noble river. It is a city intimate with great men, and designated for great men's use, with archives and museums and libraries and departments of research, to find the equal of which one must travel far. Only in my own Philadelphia of an earlier day could life run so evenly, so normally, with such interest and dignity. And to balance the intellectual opportunities of Ottawa there lies that invitation to go a-fishing, a-hunting, a-roaming, at her every door. The troublesome desires of wealth are met by the untroubled desirability of woods and waters. The nerves of the nation can be soothed by afternoons afloat. Those responsible for the welfare of the great Dominion can talk over the affairs of state and empire beside camp-fires a league away. If this does not make for poise and wisdom, then the health of governments is to be despaired of.

Feeling as some Cook tourist ought to feel as she scampers through the Louvre, I cast an eye on the charming Lac Mer Bleue, voyaged for a

brief sunset on Lac 31 Milles, talked with the Indians at Maniwaki, then folded the map and posted on to Quebec City, in dolorous haste.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAURENTIDE PARK AND LAKE EDWARD

I HAVE always had my opinion of those sightseers who rush up to a country and sniff at it and say they know it. Yet until now I had been guilty of much the same thing, of tearing around Quebec's colossal Province, tagging a lake here a mountain there, and supposing that I was seeing the Laurentians.

But a change was now under way. In addition to having fun I was to have satisfaction as well, was to see the country instead of merely blinking at it as it scooted past. I had reached a region where, instead of acting like a breathless foreigner, I could get nativated, in turn becoming Indian or habitant or voyageur. This welcome change was brought about in Providence's usual enigmatic aggravating way. I had heard that the Government was using aëroplanes for exploration purposes in the very region that I wanted to explore. Since I was out to convert the world to Canada, a little aid from the Government did not seem unreasonable—to

me. So I applied for a permit. This was Monday. I was to hear on Tuesday.

Tuesday came, and Tuesday week, and the Government still pondered over the permit. But meanwhile I had learned a lesson. This was: The more things one has to hope for, the richer life is. Day by day, now, I looked forward to two things; that permit, and Fred. The future was fairly thick with hope. Meanwhile, also, I was re-learning a second lesson: The way to travel is to stay in one place. Necessity had jerked me from my recent orbit and had said, "Sit there till you get your breath, and some sense with it." So I sat, sometimes in parliamentary anterooms, but oftener on the brow of the great cliff, getting my breath, if not my permit, and inhaling history with each lungful.

By the end of my second week I felt as if I had been to Europe. I had vaulted over the French Revolution and landed at Montcalm's door (with a volume of Parkman in my pocket), whence it was only a step to the scene of the activities of Le Jeune, Brebeuf, and Marquette. When I saw a boat coming up the St. Lawrence it was no modern craft but the inquisitive bark of Champlain, who in 1608 first landed on the shore below me. When I looked from the citadel and saw the blue ranges of the Laurentians beckoning from the north, they *were* New France to me.

For two weeks and a day I led a double life, sitting in the soft glamor of a northern June, reading "The Old Regime in Canada" and "The Jesuits in North America," living in spirit with Maisonneuve and Jeanne Mance, with Madame de la Peltrie who had such a taste for heroism, and with Frontenac who vainly desired that the Indian children acquire sedentary habits. I learned about Jean Talon who secured a peace with the Iroquois for sixteen years, and begged three hundred settlers a year from the frugal Louis, this Talon who built ships for trading and fishing, who closed the gap between Montreal and Quebec by planting settlements, who suggested other routes for ships than the ice-bound St. Lawrence, and sent men to look for minerals, and established the potash industry, and had the girls of France selected and sent over that soldiers might be eugenically mated. Talon was almost a new name to me; I ended thinking him near the greatest of them all. I strode about the streets in a haze of the sixteen hundreds, seeing not moving-picture ads but in my mind's eye that first deer-baited garden of Louis Hébert's, the first soil turned in upper Quebec town. I saw the habitants come in to see the sights, sometimes with their *engagés,* the servants, or with the *hivernants,* the hardy traders who stood the winter through. I tried to realize that even after Cham-

plain died the population of the grim rock was only eighty-five (twenty-three of them habitants, eleven interpreters, fourteen clerks connected with the fur company, ten priests, seven traders, and twenty trappers). And it was not hard to picture the aborigines attending the civic ceremonies in a sort of rapture, to see the sweating earnestness of the priests, the *coureurs des bois* arriving and departing on their romantic journeys—in short the whole vivid, living panorama painted on the screen of time forever by Francis Parkman. He, as ill as Stevenson but with as invincible a courage, made himself into an historic glass, so clear and of such strong focus that the annals of New France glow and throb with the intensity of their times still undiminished, thanks to the singular felicity of his genius for such work. To look up from my book was to hear the cries and see the colors of 1650, the little fleet dropping down stream on its autumnal voyage home, bearing the year's "Relation" from the banded black-robed Jesuits on the shore, bearing, also, their request for urgent help in the pursuance of their dream, the dream destined to be frustrated by French inability to risk a little gold for future good. History is God's diary, I think, and certainly in the long run shows the rightness of Justice's scales.

But even the double life grows at length con-

fining. Popping out of Parkman's pages into arid anterooms began to pall. Besides I had met a fascinating authority on the region, Mr. E. T. D. Chambers, whose time I devoured in large chunks while listening to accounts of his battles with the ouananiche, his travels up the Peribonka and the Mistassini; and I was soon once more afire to foot it. Mr. Chambers in addition lent me his book, "The Ouananiche and Its Canadian Environment" (now undeservedly out of print), which further inflamed my desire to reach La Grande Décharge by July when the fish do. So with a final French promise that the permit would soon be ready, I took train to Lake Edward, a half-way point on the road to Lake St. John.

The train starts early and gives one opportunity to see more burned forest than is possible, I should suppose, in any other hundred miles. I am sorry for the traveler who sees Canada only from the railroad. For a burn with its ghastly trees of the dead, its blighted underbrush, the naked rocks staring like corpses with the eyes unclosed, the ravines starved of their brooks, and no hope of future growth until the age-long cycle of lichen, moss, and soil is performed—this sight hurts any one with any capacity for reflection. And it is this sight that feeds the eye along most of the 190 miles to Lake St. John. It does not

look like hell, exactly, for that would be interesting; but as if the devil had cast a side-sneer in passing. Chin in hand, I stared from my window trying to picture the bush beyond the burn. Even the facts are sufficiently romantic:

On my left lay a vast region of rolling country, the watershed of the St. Maurice, on my right the even wilder territory comprising the Laurentide National Park. The strip of desolation through which we rumbed was, they informed me, quite narrow.

In 1895 when national parks were not so much the rage, either of animal-lovers or game-hogs, some far-seeing statesmen set aside the mountainous region contained between the St. Lawrence, the Saguenay, and the present Lake St. John Railroad and called it the Laurentide National Park, "a forest reservation, fish and game preserve, public park and pleasure-ground." The area now under protection amounts to 3700 square miles. This territory has been removed from sale or settlement forever, though timber limits in it are leased to pulp companies and also the fishing and hunting rights to private clubs. Furthermore the publicness of the park must not be taken too much for granted, for one has to buy a permit, before entering, from the Department of Colonization, Mines, and Fisheries at Quebec.

The leasing to private clubs seems to be work-

ing out well, at least as far as the Government and the club members are concerned. Club lands now form virtually a cordon around the park through which it is impossible for the poaching public to pass, since club guardians and park guards unite in an able vigilance-committee. The result is that both game and fish are increasing in numbers, and forest-fires are quelled at the beginning. Twelve rivers have their source in the park, and deforestation would have injured the water-supply of the future.

In this varied Eden a man can buy a permit, hire a guide, lease an outfit, and invest in a little moose-hunting, the license of course first having been purchased. More interesting than moose-killing, however, is to visit *le Grand Jardin des Ours* where caribou, in increasing numbers, congregate near the end of October. The "garden" is a replica of the more northern barrens, with a few stunted trees and a carpet of thick moss. It covers nearly a hundred square miles. Occasionally in summer deer can be found by the lakes, and the wardens report bear. The beaver are already abundant in certain quarters, and the usual fur-bearers, mink, otter, rat, and the foxes, are increasing in numbers. The park is rapidly becoming a sort of fountain of wild life which overflows its invisible boundaries to the benefit of the border-hunters.

My acquaintance with the park was chiefly aërial. I did not see a caribou, nor yet a wolf, though packs of these still harass the deer. Sometimes from the planes aviators can see moose standing in the rivers or swimming the lakes: such was not my luck. Neither did I catch any ten-pound trout from Grand Lac Jacques Cartier, though several speckled trout of ten pounds have been caught.

If one happens to be in the North near Lake St. John, the best entrance to the park is from Metabouchouan. Wild scenery begins at once, or at least after the fifteen-mile drive to Lac La Belle Rivière where, on the north side of the lake, the superintendent of the park has his camp. Six miles further you are at a famous river, the Rivière aux Ecorces, which you can follow for days, up or down, fishing all the time. If you are energetic you can go across the park in a week of leisurely travel to Grand Lac Jacques Cartier, at the outlet of which is supposed to be some of the best trout-fishing in the world. The easiest way to get there, however, is to drive first by automobile and then by rig from Quebec. The Government has a camp at Lac à Noël, where you spend the night. There is a map of the park published in 1908 and giving only a very sketchy outline of the territory, but it is much better than hearsay, or even guide-say, and may be obtained from the De-

Courtesy of C. P. R.

MONTMORENCY FALLS.

partment of Colonization, Mines, and Fisheries for a dollar. With this, and time, and considerable money, any one can plan out a trip which will bring him in a store of recollections.

By this time the train had reached the Batiscan, the tempestuous little river which has the grace to amuse the brûle-wearied passengers for thirty miles. We were climbing, for Lake Edward lies nearly 1300 feet above the sea. Occasionally we would pass a clearing wherein some sheep, usually with boards about their necks, were nibbling. Those boards, I should think, would seriously interfere with the texture of the mutton. Surely a sheep subjected to such irritation must grow tough from swearing.

At the little stations the total population of the vicinity had collected, backwoodsmen surely. I missed the wolfish vulgarity of the Broadway face; the women had never heard of powder, nor the men of "business is business." I think I prefer women with wind-reddened faces; for then there is a chance that their hearts are still a natural pink. And I am sure that I like best men who are good-natured and not yet aware that there's a price-tag on everything, if you are shrewd enough to find it. Their freedom is not yet on sale. To be sure it is not one-tenth so comfortable as the Broadway slavery; yet it is theirs. And I am sure that it is better to fare a

mile along your own road than be motored forty leagues along another's. Most men have only a part interest in life; and for fear of poverty, or the lost esteem of others, or even from mistaken sympathies, they lose the satisfaction and thrills of mastership. Not so with these lean, unshaven, pipe-sucking mountaineers grouped by their sterile fields. Their clothes, their fleshly garments, were as worn and weather-stained as the lean, thin bush about them. But their eyes! They looked at you, levelly, without envy, often with a smile of equality. I could admire and fraternize with them. Compared with the slinking, harried, envious eyes of Broadway these had a royal look. The old, old question: Would you rather be king of a northern berry-pasture, or cog in a soulless corporation? The answer is easy: Whichever helps you along your own road—*yours*.

I was now counting on the brothers Rowley to help me along mine. From my earliest visits to Champlain's city I had heard of these men. I had visualized them in a dozen Cooperesque environments, all but riding to the stag-hunt on caparisoned nags, certainly directing their corps of guides with, let us say, insouciance and a certain flair. God help all visualizers!

Lake Edward consisted, to my disappointed gaze, of a roundhouse, some deserted mills, a

store. I inquired for Rowley, and was thumbed toward the store. Inside, a big man with graying hair, and the kindly uncompromising expression of a train conductor, was leaning over an immense ledger, adding up, I suppose, his wealth. I waited, then—

"Where can I find Mr. George Rowley, sir?"

"Here, sir."

Another pause. "Did you get a letter from me ten days ago?"

"I think we did. I guess we were just going to answer that."

"Well, no matter now, I 'm here. I can have a guide for the Bostonnais?"

"The water 's very low."

"But I suppose one can start, anyway." My rage was mounting. Why had n't they written if the water was too low, as I had asked.

"Oh, yes," between columns of figures, "I guess you can start. My brother tends to that end of the game—three-hundred five, three hundred thirteen."

Another pause. It is such a nuisance being short. If I had been six foot nine I am sure I should not have felt so hopeless before him. I looked around the store. It was stocked thoughtfully and with good brands, a mouth-watering anthology of meals. I looked at the men leaning on the counter or sitting in the wall-dusk. They

seemed thoughtful and of a good brand, too, though thinly sugared with the amenities. Then out of a clear column—he had reached the nine hundreds—came the words, "Arthur, take the gentleman to his room, please"; and I was shown to a little eaves place, wondering in my wrath how the Rowleys had ever got their reputation.

I found out—at their own good time. That evening we sat around the store and I got acquainted with George Rowley; a man who had grown up with the country, and had become its master, by dint of foresight, honesty, and application. Nor is that highland country an easy realm to lord it over, with its roughness, its pest of flies, its seven months of cold, and its irresponsibles. He was, I found, storekeeper to half a kingdom; and I ceased to wonder at the busy ledger. It was his job to grub-stake shanty-men, to outfit sports, to play postmaster, and keep the poachers out of the park, to be first aid to forest fires in a radius of fifty miles.

His brother Robert, younger, married, fine-looking, and with the address of a college man, joined us. His part of this concern was the management of guests. He arranged not only for the parties into their own leased wilderness (covering 750 square miles, and including about 150 lakes), but also despatched parties of exploration into the farthest wilds, Chibougamou, Lake

Mistassini, and Hudson's Bay. That, also, is not a task for inexperience. By choosing the wrong guides, by leaving out the ammunition or falling short on flour, he could easily have dead men on his conscience. The bush will not be played with.

That was a great evening. I sat on the counter, Bob Rowley on a keg of nails, and his brother not far from that eternal ledger, with two guides looking on in affirmative silence through the dusk caused by a veteran lamp. The older brother supplied the reminiscence, the younger one enthusiasm, until I felt that it was ridiculous of me to go further. The Almighty, in making Lake Edward, had evidently had the Rowleys and their guests in mind.

In the morning, while they were packing supplies for my guide and me, since I contemplated looking at the Bostonnais no matter how dry, I strolled down toward the sanatorium and stumbled on one of those refreshing surprises which may occur wherever there are human beings; to wit, a hero at his post. For all that it was June, summer, and within a fortnight of the day when the sun should turn and begin his ebb-march, a brisk wind blew from the polar spaces, and gooseflesh formed on the geese who had donned summer underwear. I sat in the reception-room, listening to the gale in the eaves, and picturing the

nine months of winter, the long dark, the inescapable isolation, the routine of tubercular wards, the responsibility of the man in charge. He had to keep the routine sweet, the dying cheerful, their nurses sane. I felt the childishness of the most of our complaints when we deem that our deserved portion of happiness has not been served us. Then Dr. J. A. Couillard came in; and at a glance I could see that Dr. Trudeau's spirit had penetrated to this outpost of the North.

Dr. Couillard had held the fort already for six years, and had made the Lake Edward Sanatorium what it is, the one place east of Ste. Agathe where the tubercular can go in hopes of cure. The doctor is young and scholarly and versatile and enthusiastic and an organizer. With eagerness he showed me the barber-shop where he plays barber and the dentist-chair where he assists nature, the library which could accommodate a few more books, and the porches whence the patients look day after day into the unnamed, untraveled ranges to the southwest.

Lake Placid lies but ten miles from Saranac Lake, and I am well acquainted with the momentous work that Dr. Trudeau, *fils,* Dr. Baldwin, and the others, to whom the mantle has fallen, carry on. I have seen their magnificent equipment, too. So to be shown the little den in which Dr. Couillard labors was to bring back to me the

primitive days of the Trudeau "Autobiography." Dr. Couillard's energy, his hopefulness that the frugal Province might soon take an interest in his work, his courage and good cheer, must quicken the spirit of those about to die, or better, cure them. In fact his average of cures is very high. I stepped from his threshold refreshed. I had come to Lake Edward expecting to be entranced by the renowned Rowleys; I left, captivated by the unheard-of Dr. Couillard. The gray Fates must have their little joke.

Indeed the Fates were now in a highly affable mood; and their first service to me was to supply as guide Louis Loquax. Loquax of course was not the name bestowed on him by prophetic foresight, but by me in thankfulness that he was not another Jules the Speechless. I was now nearer that region of the true, undiluted French-Canadian, whose pastime is his talk. To get French Canada at its creamiest, go from Quebec to the Ile d'Orleans, thence along the North Shore to Tadousac, and up the Saguenay to the Ile d'Alma (of which haven more anon), to Roberval and St. Felicien. This great V is New France still, fervent, old-fashioned, and full of conversation. Loquax came from St. Felicien.

To get an idea of the Rowleys' realm, picture a lake twenty miles long, broad and narrow by turns, and as full of moods as a type-setter.

Sometimes out shoots a leg, as in the chorus, and sometimes an arm. The arms are reaching for other lakes just across the hills, and often they are rewarded. The result is that from half a dozen bays on Lake Edward you can connect by stream or portage with twice two dozen other streams or ponds, and travel for days in the territory belonging to Laurentide House without running on the same rocks twice. It is an intriguing situation, and the Rowleys have made the best of it by erecting camps and shelters at intervals when the canoeist is just growing shy of more labor. The first few of these can even be reached by motor-boat; and in summer, when families are ensconced about the wilderness, a daily round is made with provisions. But I have a spaniel shyness of motor-boats (and good reason in these northern and most unmechanical wilds), so Loquax and I, leaving Mr. George bending over his ledger in the dusky store, set forth on a flat-clouded forenoon, headed for the Rivière aux Rats and the Bostonnais.

Heaven and my publishers forbid that I wax as garrulous over the next five days as did Louis Loquax. I shall chiefly say that the jaunt was worth while, but not because it was as advertised. We saw moose-bushes and some deer-grass, a fish-hawk or two and some bare rocks. But of moose, deer, fish, or bear—next to nothing. Some-

how, from conversations, I had gathered the notion that one had to wind one's way among the moose to avoid bumping into them; and that the bears scattered before one only to re-assemble in curious groups behind. In our case they had scattered to Labrador for the season. Our largest trout was under three pounds. But I think my chief disappointment was the third-growth forest.

Let me quote, verbatim, from the sort of rapture that is the traditional mode of forest advertisement: "Beneath the umbrageous protection of majestic forests, hidden in the sheltered recess of a trackless wilderness, bordered completely by pompous wood-crowned mountains, reposes, in peaceful seclusion, a glassy lake. Imperial domes of mutable green rear their reverential crests above its incurvated shores, made musical by the chirrup of wild birds . . ." I would like to see the imperial domes, that think out such reverential rubbish, hunting around in the dark for a little dry fire-wood in the aspen-covered areas made desolate by repeated fires. Later I was to see the primeval forest in its full dignity and beauty. There one did not want to slobber adjectives over it. There one was constrained to meet its silence with silence. Its magnanimity kindles an inexpressible elation. This babbling in advertisements of what does not exist reacts dis-

astrously on the advertised. What deception loses, candor might have won. The interest of Lake Edward lies not in umbrageous forests or in a concourse of bears, but in the fact that during the fishing months of June and September there are great catches possible, and in the availability of other territory, access to which is made easy by the Rowley organization.

That afternoon Loquax and I paddled the ten miles to the mouth of the Rat River, up its winding length for half a mile, and poled a mile and a quarter, making camp by an old dam in use when the region was lumbered.

The sun that afternoon must have got awfully tired of watching me try to pole. For a process that looks so simple, poling is a delusion and the river-bed a snare. The idea is to stick a pole into the bottom and lightly waft the canoe against the current. An Indian can slither the thing upstream faster than I can walk along the shore. He can do it all day, furthermore. Blisters and I were never so thankful as when we saw that dam. There we camped. I tried for trout and got some suckers. "*Un trou du fou,*" said Loquax grinning.

I would go so far as to say that in the bush the guide *is* the trip. Sullen, stupid, lazy, or deceitful, he can mar a sojourn in paradise; persevering, intelligent, good-humored, he will make

even the brûle passable. Loquax was lazy but with a sense of humor, and as we had no objective but a sight of the Bostonnais, did very well. That first evening, after talking the usual exaggerations about game which all guides think that all sportsmen like to hear, he told about his work in the shanties, from that to fairy-tales, and from those to riddles. Here is one I had never heard before, and wager you 'll not guess:

"Qu' est-ce que le bon Dieu ne voit jamais, le prêtre rarement, mais un fermier tous les jours?"

I was stumped; if the *bon Dieu* never saw it, how could I be expected to know about it, I asked Loquax. He rolled up in merriment, his ruddy little cheeks jumping, his black eyes popping. "His shadow, *naturellement,*" he cried when he could keep it in no longer.

The Rat River affords variety certainly. Next day we had three miles on the dam-broadened river, a short portage around rapids, a one-and-a-half mile paddle and a half-mile portage on good trail. These portages are all marked. Then marshy country along the river for a mile and a half, two portages aggregating three-quarters of a mile in one, in fact several short portages alternating with short paddles till we came to the end of the Rat and camped. A porcupine and young sheldrakes constituted the visible menagerie of the day.

The drought was now well established over the land, and each morning we woke to the well-known haze, each evening dismissed a sun frowsy with the heat. This third day brought us over a two-mile carry to Lac Pete, from Lac Pete due east (instead of the usual westerly trend we had been taking) to Lac Clair, about three-quarters of a mile. Lac Clair is a charming lake, with two islands in it. I indulged in a swim to the nearest—Loquax, I hope, envying me. He had been too lazy to learn. In fact most guides and river-men are unable to swim, which to me seems as ridiculous as for pianists not to be able to read notes or priests say their prayers. You can imagine how self-reliant a Canuck must feel, when, in an emergency on the water, he cannot rely on himself.

From Lac Clair you cross the divide, a rough bit of portaging three miles long, with deadfalls, to Eighth Lake, which is two miles in length. Thence, should you be going down the Bostonnais to La Tuque (a trip which is not only supposed to be very beautiful but also lined with bears), you are confronted by a five-mile carry! Even if you are stopping with Eighth Lake, as were we, don't fail to walk down that trail until you get the view of the Bostonnais Valley; it is the finest single scenic item at Lake Edward. The Bostonnais is one of the largest tributaries of

the St. Maurice, and as you stand near the brink of the gorge that it has cut, you look past a great sand-bank and for a moment forget the third-growth bush in the panorama beyond, the distant forest falling into the five hundred foot gulf, the green contours, and the stillness. Beauty effaces the flies, the heat, and Loquax. You know that this is an imperishable moment, that it is good to have come.

CHAPTER X

MARIA CHAPDELAINE OF PERIBONKA

NOW was to begin my comparatively golden era. Heaven, it seems to any traveler, is a place where one can do a little permanent unpacking. In Roberval I expected to unpack, although I was not counting on calling the place heaven. Not, certainly, that first evening.

There ought to be some stimulant which arriving strangers could take which would not incapacitate them for registering at the desk and yet would make them feel immediately at home. It is hateful enough to arrive anywhere; but to arrive in a small town is worse; and to arrive in a foreign small town, whose only hostelry it is beneath the range of polite adjectives to describe, this scarcely suggests the celestial wicket gate. But remember, nothing really matters to a man except his fellow-men, and in Roberval—But, I anticipate; I have not yet arrived.

The rail journey from Lake Edward to Chamboard Junction where one changes for Roberval

had been curiously varied. The train provided an observation hind-end, whence one could more intimately observe the blackened stumps and stunted second growths of the forest, now civilized nearly out of existence. Rrumpety-bumpty-bumpty-bumpty went the irregular refrain of the equally irregular wheels; clickety-clickty-clickty-click chirruped the rails as we frisked around the curves. Rrumpety-bumpty-clickety-clank—an inconceivably soothing song. But it must have annoyed the bears, for I did not see one.

The moose, however, were less touchy. One old gaunt cow hobbled out of the engine's way and stood in the river, unable to place the apparition. Even with the first yards of leg hidden by a pretty river, a she-moose is, my gallantry regrets to say, even more hideous than the he, a dingy, hump-backed, hooked-nosed, clothes-horse of a sight. To be adrift on a little lake in the quiet night and hear the call of some cow is to be stirred as no orchestra can stir one; or to have a bull materialize from nothing against a fading sky, the imbodiment of an antlered dignity almost passed from earth,—then your heart beats admiration. But mostly I advise the moose family to keep out of sight if they wish to be eulogized, for their combination of humps and hide is disastrous, esthetically speaking. As our train wiggled out of sight the aged cow stalked rheumatic-

ally back to the track, doubtless inveighing against civilization in her mind.

The sixty-five miles from Lake Edward to Chambord acclimated my mind to space. We were high and could look far. The distant ranges, huckleberry hued, sustained my imagination that drooped whenever I looked near-by at the fire-desecrated forest with the futile signs tacked to dead trees at the stations:

> Arretez un Instant.
> Jetter les allumettes enflammées
> Ou laisser des Feux allumés,
> Est-ce prudent?

After the horse is stolen we lock the stable door, presumably to protect the mice.

Mistake me not; I am coming to a different story soon. For days I was to dwell in the primeval bush, the reposeful mirror of its Maker's mind, enchanted. In this book I am trying not to sidestep the truth, and refuse to call the spades I met dessert-spoons. Canada is God's country; I only wonder that He does not squirm a bit at the thought of certain sections. But at Kiskisink, or at Van Bruyssels—named for a charming and hospitable gentleman who is developing that region,—at Lac Long or Lizotte or Lac Commissionaire, in short anywhere that one chooses to step off the train, the bush is waiting to receive one. Three strokes of the paddle

and one has rounded some point and put the tin cans and discomforts of a too-new civilization behind.

At four-thirty of a placid afternoon our loose-jointed train manœuvered around the last curve above Chambord, and, as paradise opens out before a mystic's eyes, there unfolded before mine the blue, composure-blest, wide waters of St. John, and beyond, the dim, wild gateways to the space-begotten North!

Any man who lives much out of doors learns his kinship with nature as cannot the man of offices and elevators. Little by little he becomes earth's son and brother to the rain; and it does not seem at all queer to him that the Indians, who are as close to nature as fruit to the tree, should believe that the leaves can overhear their talk. On this trail back to naturalness a man thinks more and more of the North, because it signifies all that has never been man-handled. Its names are a lure to him, and its conditions a dare; and when it finally bursts on him in such a view as that above the hamlet of Chambord, the effect is like a dream come true.

From the moment I debarked at Chambord until, moons later, I left the storied coves of Tadousac, I was to dwell in habitant-land. And whatever I may say about it, I have an affection for habitant-land that corresponds indeed to the

affection one has for childhood's sunniest hours. It is a land of far-away.

My entrance into it was made in probably the dirtiest train that has ever been jerked along the rails. The car was full of near neighbors, apparently, for everybody was talking in unison and splashing along the tobaccoed aisles, visiting each other. The men spat like northeasters, and I found myself speculating as to how deep waters must be before the moon can cause tides.

There was a charm about this quite inexplicable but real. I think it was because everybody looked so healthy, and so ravishingly happy. The women had personality. It was evidently intended for girls to lead the habitant life, for color and figure and expression were theirs. They talked with all their features, incessantly, never pausing to catch anybody else's views on the matter under discussion. In fact the twenty or thirty separate conversations dissolved into a cheerful cloud of chatter that arose toward the ceiling with the smoke. Unluckily the ventilators were not open, and the air grew rather dense with talk. Perhaps that is why I could not understand it. Louis and I had just spent intelligible days together; and now I might as well have been in Persia. Dialogue in French is one thing; the crowd-clamor is another.

The men were almost as vivacious as the

women, and, unit for unit, finer-looking. Their long days in the fields following a long winter in the bush had put well-wrought flesh on muscle, and the bloom of health atop all. There were no bald-heads, no blonds. Dark, glowing eyes, and sometimes splendid profiles and chins, were spoiled by wretched teeth. There are obviously no dentists in French Canada. They probably have all gone insane at the prospect. With cared-for teeth, and an infusion of a little noble discontent, the habitants would make as handsome a nation as there is. Despite the reek and clatter of that car, I felt a certain elation in being with them. "Here," said I to myself, "I have found a people knowing what they want." In an hour we had skirted Lake St. John westwards to Roberval.

Life is a perpetual sloping up toward some ecstatic moment and a slipping back again. That evening at supper I touched bottom with, to all appearances, an infernal finality. There was a letter from Fred with another postponement. There was no letter containing my permit to fly. My table companions champing on their food interested me, at that moment, no more than so many animated bathroom tiles. The food looked sooty and colorless. And I could not make out what the waitress was saying to me.

"Soupeatamatessoupeapois!"

Oh! It is perfectly clear now, after twenty-one suppers beginning precisely in the same manner. But it was n't then. She was too high-strung to be a waitress, anyway. Waiting less than a second for my decision she geared up the remark a notch higher and volleyed forth again, "Soupeatamatessoupeapois!" Prestissimo agitato.

"Merci," I said, judging that the tomato-colored water in my neighbor's plate was scarcely worth the time.

"Steakjambonoeufs," now said the waitress in an unintelligible streak.

"Comment?"

"Steakjamboneufs!" Now I admit that the thing looks simple enough in print; but, as a menu, the remark failed utterly.

The temperamental female stood by waiting in a sort of crystallized shrug, that most detestable of all gestures, whilst I bethought me of the word for "anything." My fellow-feeders gnawed to themselves, offering no assistance, and I was about to let the capricious she choose for me when a voice, behind, in heavenly English said, "Don't risk the eggs."

My fellow-sufferer was young, as I saw by turning gratefully, tall and easy-smiling and from the States.

"What would you advise?" I asked.

"Always the steak," said he; "are you here for long?"

Thus Phil Kimball fell fortuitously into the loneliness of that evening. Later we strolled Roberval's one thoroughfare and discussed the future. Phil was selling tractors, and had been waiting in Roberval in an agony of indolence for some ten days until some mis-freighted parts should arrive. Since he was in Roberval there was no sense in leaving, with his job undone; yet each succeeding hour that he waited brought him an ever more crushing appreciation of life's fatuities, and especially life in Roberval. To comprehend this one must first have been a rather lively young man in New York and then spend a week in Roberval, where the facilities for liveliness consist of a cigarette-shop, a barber-shop, and Mademoiselle Huot's. There once had been a hotel, but that had burned down. There once had been a moving-picture place; but that had been adjudged harmful to the laity by the church, and closed. No matter how short a life one enjoyed, providing it was spent in Roberval, one would die feeling full of years. At least this was the sum of Philip's paroxysms. I had seen nothing yet with which to confute them. In order not to seem void of my own woes I told my sympathetic mate of my efforts toward a flying permit.

"Yes, there is a flight from here nearly every day," he said.

"I stay until I fly," I said, in a wave of stubbornness.

"I stay till those tractor parts come," said he. "Long life to us."

"In Roberval."

And being in a way set, we began to enjoy ourselves.

The morrow was the Sabbath. All over French Canada the population would be stringing to church, the rest of the day to be hallowed unto sport or relaxation. My relaxation began at breakfast. No longer afraid that I should get no food, I could study our unique waitress as one studies Sarah Bernhardt. She had only less variety. The morning rites began always in the same way. Bernhardt, wiping a hand or putting the last twitch to her hair, would saunter through the kitchen door looking like the chapter in "Lamentations" wherein all is considered vanity. If this did not move Phil and me to praise, her face would fall and she would drag her feet, as if she were Phædra mourning her infants slain. If this still did not move us she would become downright unpleasant; and to forestall this moment we always had some remark ready to the effect that she was more beautiful than lilies or the

rosy footed dawn. In reality—but why spoil the picture? It pleased the simple girl. She brightened up like a kerosene torch and then asked whether we would have "Steakjambonoefscafé-duthé." On replying, "Steak," she would start toward the kitchen, releasing high stacatto yells to warn the keeper of the steak to have some ready. As a waitress she was unusual.

It was Sunday morning in Roberval, as doubtless over the rest of our hemisphere, but others had none such. A wind from the northwest darkened the face of the lake, carrying gallant clouds from its far haunts of mystery and beauty. And as the people poured from the church I heard such questions as "Do you think they 'll go?" "Is n't it too rough?" "Are you coming, Ducharme?" "Non, 'fait fret," which is their way of saying "il fait froid."

It transpired that there was to be a picnic across the lake; and thanks to Phil, who was now a pillar of Roberval society, I was invited. The dock was at the other end of town, and thither the whole town was moving. I had seen no vessel larger than a tug, and wondered how such unanimity was to be taken care of. Automobiles, buggies, and other rigs shot by, from church to wharf, each bulging with happy ex-worshippers and picnickers-to-be. Little did I know the true

gala spirit of the French-Canadian. These people were going only to see us off, to know that we were happy.

I thought to inquire our destination. "Peribonka, Monsieur."

Peribonka. I had heard of the river, and another association of the name floated in my hind-head, tenuously, ungraspably; and I did not grope for it. There was too much to see; for our craft, studded with rapturous lunchers-out, after turning around twice in the minute harbor, made straight for sea. As it left I caught sight of the flying-boat, sitting on the waters and brooding, doubtless, over the sights that it had seen.

My glimpses of Lake St. John had been merely past the various buildings which lie between Roberval's sidewalk and the surf. Now I gazed with enthusiasm on the scene which had thrilled its discoverer in 1647, the energetic de Quen. This ardent Father commenced a series of explorations in 1636 for the spread of the Jesuit doctrines and actually saw what Roberval set out to see a century before. Of Roberval's expedition the only thing known is that one boat upset and eight men were drowned; and whether the French governor was lost on the Saguenay or massacred in Paris, as is advanced, Atropos alone knows. History, whimsical at the best, loses all sense of proportion in naming the town

for Roberval while ignoring de Quen, whose labors were so much more zealous than the erratic governor's.

Lake St. John is now about thirty miles wide and nearly circular. In a damper age it probably covered all the bottom-lands between the distant mountain ranges. These rose before us in terraces of windy ultramarine to the south, near the lake, and hovered on the horizons of north and east like wordless invitations to hardy men. With surprising celerity our nimble boat splashed into the growing waves, and the little town at our rear looked ever less an asylum, ever more an ornament. Pointe Bleue, where the Hudson's Bay Co. had a post, lying white and green along the water, fell behind us on the west, and I could see where the Ashuapmouchouan (which is not an Indian alphabet, but a river) entered. Further to the northwest there was a flat blueness, vacant of shore, where the Mistassini came in. We were steering a little east of north for the Peribonka River. Was there ever such a lake? Forty named rivers, unite to make this inland reservoir, and some of those that actually enter (of which there are eighteen) are a mile wide at the mouth. Three of these are from 300 to 400 miles long, huge serpents of water issuing from a land that to-day is unsettled, unsurveyed, and unexplored, except as Indians canoeing on fixed routes can

be said to be explorers. New York State would not be described as explored, if all that was known of it had been learned by canoeing on the Hudson from Albany to the mouth, or by sitting in a train from Troy to Buffalo.

Phil and I sat in the lee of the cabin and laughed at the gentle tomfooleries with which the Gallic blood proclaimed its light-heartedness. Those young men and girls, older men and wives, and a few veterans of the years, built up for themselves a red-letter day out of the most evanescent materials, out of chatter and titters and ginger-beer. What a facility they had for amusement, and what an incapability of sitting still! Neither Phil nor I are rheumatic, but it would have hurt us to move as incessantly as did those sons and daughters of the moment. Leaves in a gale, Easter chickies in a shop-window, squirrels in a progressive cage!

But presently a change. The wind rose. The lake became more and more deficient in solidity. It became increasingly hard for some of them to hide their troubles under an air of ease. Lake St. John is as facile as the French, and what her morning promises her noon does not always present.

Just as the mirth began to ebb and as all the different shades and qualities of abdominal gloom started to appear we ran behind a sandy point,

and all the vivacity broke forth again. This was pleasant. The French-Canadian has no emergency ration of resolution beneath his belt; and where the Anglo-Saxon curses but goes on, he, often wisely, stops. And he hates the water. I have seen tears standing in his eye when Lake St. John rose and roared, when the Briton would have laughed in an outdoor ecstasy. And I have seen him laugh, with sweat rolling into his eyes, and black flies sucking in desperation at every pore, with a canoe on his head and a stubborn hill in front, when I could have sat down and wept for vexation of spirit. But nobody who remembers Verdun can ever criticize the French.

All this while, the name Peribonka had been groping in the closets and drawers of my memory for a misplaced association. Suddenly this now came to light: Peribonka, Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine;* of course! I had the thing in my pocket, a yellow-backed romance which the author called "Récit du Canada Français."

"What 's the book?" asked Phil.

"Attendez, mon fils," I said, and read; "Louis Hémon was born at Brest on October 12, 1880. He died at Chapleau (Province of Ontario, Canada), on July 8, 1913, a victim of a railroad accident."

"What of it?" snorted Phil. "Didn't the family get damages?"

"He lived," I continued, "in Canada eighteen months in 1912 and 1913, spending entire months on farms working in the fields with the habitants in order to study them more closely."

"Or waiting for tractor parts," said Phil. "Imagine passing entire *months* on these farms! Look at this river, will you?"

"One sentence more," I said, "Louis Hémon lived in the vicinity of Lake St. John, at Roberval at Saint-Gédeon and particularly at Peribonka. It was in these long visits, that he composed 'Maria Chapdelaine'."

"After that one can understand the railroad accident," said Phil sardonically. "How 's the book?"

"Unread," I had to confess, and we looked into it, page 1, Chapter I:

"'Ite, missa est.' La porte de l'église de Peribonka s'ouvrit et les hommes commencerent à sortir."

"Well, I see that we 're in for running up and taking a look at that church," said Phil, good-naturedly complying with my unspoken intention.

Phil was just that sort, guessing what you 'd like, and then gracefully bringing it about in the manner of those angels who used to descend for one's personal relief, but who have since been killed by an overdose of logic. We decided on Peribonka.

The picnic intended to debouch on a point a mile below the village; but the captain consented to run us up the river, which was wide and swift and sandy.

The most beautiful adventures are those which bud from little and slowly open out to more until an unexpected flower of pleasure lifts you above the common day. If the habit of your heart is wise you will enjoy them as they come. All the transitions of our day had seemed to Phil and me very gradual; from violent breakfast to the porch, from porch to party, to Peribonka, to the scene of *Maria Chapdelaine's* church-goings. But now the crescendo began. A priest was coming down the wooden steps of the edifice, and I ventured a question about the heroine.

"Why don't you ask Madam Bédard? She *is Maria Chapdelaine.*"

"*Maria Chapdelaine* real?" I gasped. "And living?"

The father smiled. "Not only living, but living there, Monsieur," and he pointed along the little street which bordered the broad river.

"Let 's beard the heroine in her den," said Phil. "She 'll probably need to be bearded, anyway; I 'll wager her a hag of ninety, with one tooth and a crutch."

Phil lost. The door was opened to us by a nearing-middle-age woman still habited in her

Sunday-go-to-mass clothes, whose tendency was toward portliness, but elegantly, and whose complexion still recalled the rose. As *François Paradis,* the hero of the romance, said to the father, "Votre fille, c'est different; elle a changé; mais je l' aurais bien reconnue tout de suite." So we easily knew that here was she whom we sought, but Philip said, "Bonjour, Madame, is Mademoiselle *Maria Chapdelaine* in?"

Imagine the pleasure of knocking at the door of the *Virginian's* ranch home and asking if *Molly Stark* was in!

But Madame Bédard was not complimented. She said, "This is Monsieur Samuel Bédard's house."

"Samuel Chapdelaine, Samuel Bédard, peculiar coincidence," thought I, and said, "La même chose, Madame?"

Still madame did not smile and probably was saved from perjury by the opportune appearance of Monsieur Bédard himself, a man nearing fifty, I suppose, but strong, if rather slight, and with the address and manner of a transplanted courtier. Samuel Bédard is the big man of Peribonka, that is, of the whole north country thereabouts.

"What do the gentlemen want, Maria?"

At the give-away Maria turned with an exquisite shrug and allowed him the doorway; we told him what we wanted.

"Yes," he said, after we had been not only invited in but to dinner—and who could refuse to dine with the characters of romance? "Yes, Louis Hémon spent the winter with us, a silent man, and frail. I don't think our winter agreed with him. He said that he was after health and wished to work in the fields. The work in the bush was too hard for him, so he worked with me here, and in the evenings wrote. We did not know that he was writing about us, until one day after he had gone there came three copies of the book. I 'm afraid they 've all been taken. People will take things, you know."

"Yes, they 'll take another man's time if they can't lay hands on his pocket-book," I said, thinking fiercely of the tea-and-time consumers' leagues I knew, "and I am sure you have affairs right now, Monsieur."

"Mais non, Monsieur." We might have been in Paris (instead of on the very verge of nowhere), discussing the art of life.

"Why does she hate to admit it?" asked Phil, when we had got back to the subject. "I should think she 'd be proud of being in a novel; I would."

"Well," began Monsieur Bédard cautiously, "there is nothing in the book that she 's ashamed of. It is a very nice book. But one does n't like one's life paraded before the curious, does one?"

"It is a worthy curiosity, Monsieur, is n't it, this desire to know how you are living in this Northland, to learn what one like yourself is thinking, and how your thoughts differ from the thoughts of city people? I shall read of your *vie implacable* with intense interest after seeing that it can breed gentlemen like yourself."

"I do not care myself," he said smiling, "but she does." His thumb pointed to the kitchen, whence blew savory smells mingling with strains of an old song, "Bonhomme, bonhomme, que sais-tu donc faire?" in a most delicious minor.

"Her heart is not exactly broken, anyway," said Phil.

"Oh, she can cook still!" laughed Monsieur Bedard.

We were called to dinner.

I wish that I knew whether the French-Canadian of the farther places objects to being called "habitant." I have been told he does. He of course smilingly refutes it, though I notice that he refers to his brother as *fermier* or *cultivateur*. A French-Canadian will never hurt your feelings to your face, never say what he thinks you will not like to hear. This is sometimes more maddening than the truth, for if you ask him whether the train has gone, whether some road is practicable, whether the hotel is good, he will reply to please, at whatever hazard to the

truth. I often asked whether I did right in thinking of some rural friend as "habitant," for I admire the term; and no one, at least, challenged me to a duel. So here I would fain refer to Monsieur Bédard as the ideal habitant, as well as ideal host.

The ideal habitant, as I was so often to find him in habitant-land from Roberval to Tadoussac, comes nearer to living in the atmosphere of the Twenty-third Psalm than any man on our planet. His cup runneth over, and he knows it. The priest is his shepherd, and he knows that the church will never let him want. But this does not plunge him into vicious idleness, rather into a wealth of tranquillity. He has cows in his pasture, cream on his table, and twins in the cradle. Although there is a piano, and a well-tuned piano, in the parlor and a Ford in the stable, he goes into the bush of a winter. His pipe is his panacea. His wife is his personal property, on which is declared the dividend of one (or two) offspring per annum. He is led by temperament and religion beside the still waters; and goodness, if not mercy, accompanies him. What the Puritan is to the tradition of America, so will the habitant be, centuries from now, in Canadian annals. The time is coming, perhaps, when he will be civilized into the universal mediocrity. But that time has not reached its palsy-

ing fingers into the cracks and crevices of furthermost habitant-land. And I am happy to have known him, lord of his rugged manor; happy to have been joint-enjoyer of the pleasures of the land; and happiest to have made his acquaintance in the persuasive person of Monsieur Bédard.

Of course, as lords, we ate first; and, as guests, in the dining-room. There were deer and caribou heads about the room, and the inevitable pickle-jar and blue-and-gold china on the table. But the food was different; so different from the hard-pan of Roberval, or the more refined hash of other eating-houses. Phil enjoyed himself in a sort of succulent frenzy, taking time, however, to present Madame Maria with a compliment when each new delicacy disclosed occasion. To hear some people criticize the habitants you would suppose that they had retained of their French nothing except the vices; but if Brittany, or Paris or Lorraine, can furnish bread more palatable, veal better done, or *pudding au riz avec confiture* of wild strawberry from the near-by glens, they should advertise. After doing considerable violence to the meal, we smoked and talked, until Madame, aided by eleven visiting cousins, had put the kitchen in order and joined us. May the fumes of the infernal pit choke a body who is so comfortable and does not appreciate it!

Later Monsieur Bédard had to leave; the picnickers at the point had sent up for him. Nothing, or no event in Peribonka, at least, was complete without his presence. Phil and I stayed a while longer, and Madame Maria told us of her husband's life, of how he had earned needed money by staging people across Lake St. John all one winter, in the teeth of blizzards and fearful temperatures. She told of *le pays austère* to the north, told of the life in her former home; and finally, prodded by Phil's ingratiating persistence, told us of Hemon and how true his romance was. The picture she made, rosy, smiling, planting her elbows on the counter of their little store, when she was not using her hands to enforce a point, was memorable, typical. Well-nourished, with a genuineness of color and vivacity that became beauty, yet strong, able to endure —no wonder Hemon was inspired to write the romance of habitant-land.

That is what "Maria Chapdelaine" is—the first, and quite possibly the best-to-be, of such tales embodying the evasive simplicities of the *colon valeureux.* The progress of the story employs no literary inventions to stimulate its pace, which is one with the calendar. *Maria* is introduced to us leaving the church, her one annual great pleasure, in order to drive back through the half-burnt bush and across dangerous ice to her

father's frontier farm for another year of laborious isolation. A fine-looking, true-hearted trapper and guide, *François Paradis,* sees her and they mutually love. He attempts a long journey to see her at Christmas and is slain by winter. *Maria* pledges to the Virgin a thousand Aves, which nearly break the reader's heart, so poignant do they grow as he knows the sickening truth in store for her. Another lover breaks the news to *Maria* of *François's* death—a hopeless lover, this *Eutrope Gagnon.* Life goes on demanding sacrifice and struggle. *Maria's* mother dies, and the reader, who is of the family, suffers all the suspense of awaiting the doctor, the curé, who tells her that it is her duty to marry. A third beau, this one from the States, offers his hand and comparative wealth, and *Maria* wavers. But not for long. The tradition grips her; she sticks by the land, and accepts the hopeless *Gagnon.*

Such is the story, the outline of which conveys Hemon about as adequately as if one were to say of *Romeo* and *Juliet* that they were a nice couple who loved and lost. The outline shows the grim externals of life in Peribonka. The novel itself, by a simple sincerity as naïve as Bunyan, makes the reader taste and smell and hear the things by which the men and women of that north country live. After one lays down the book the story is not over. They go living on. One knows that

Maria is up there, creating happiness for her *Eutrope* out of the meager resources. One senses the imperishable strength of people with their feet in the soil. One feels the peace of the spring rain that is to unfetter the land, and the resignation that greets the coming again of winter.

While the real Maria was talking to us, I wished a thousand times that I had read the book. But later I was glad that I had seen the veritable heroine first, for the memory of her motherly features, her alternating gentleness and scorn, ire and humor, her gestures and rapid speech, added to rather than displaced the younger woman whom Hemon has given to the world. What a unique opportunity to come upon a living sequel and find no cleft, no change to insipidity! How often since when turning over the pages I have said to myself, "Yes, how true," or "I remember that," and in these singing pages how often the unsayable gets said!

Recently have appeared two translations, from which the "Canadian Bookman" has given quotations. I am going to include a paragraph of Hemon where *François, Maria's* beloved, confesses to a sin of his, and then show how Sir Andrew Macphail and Mr. W. H. Blake transfer the sense of it from one language to another.

Et c'est vrai aussi que je sacrais un peu. A vivre tout le temps avec des hommes *rough* dans le bois ou

sur les rivières, on s' accoutume à ça. Il y a eu un temps que je sacrais pas mal, et M. le curé Tremblay m' a disputé une fois parce que j' avais dit devant lui que je n' avais pas peur du diable. Mais c' est fini, Maria. Je vais travailler tout l' été à deux piastres et demie par jour et je mettrai de l' argent de coté, certain. Et à l' automne je suis sur de trouver une *job* comme foreman dans un chantier, avec de grosses gages. Au printemps prochain, j' aurai plus de cinq cents piastres de sauvées, claires, et je reviendrai.

Sir Andrew translates:—

And it is also true that I swore a bit. Living all the time with rough men in the woods or on the rivers, —that is the custom. There was a time when I used to swear pretty bad, and curè Tremblay once rebuked me for having said before him that I was not afraid of the devil. But that is over, Maria. I am going to work all summer at two dollars and a half a day. And I will surely put the money aside. And in the fall I am certain to find a job as foreman in a shanty with high wages. Next spring I will have more than five hundred dollars clear savings, and I will come back.

And Mr. Blake translates:—

And it is also true that I used to swear. When one lives all the time with rough men in the woods or on the rivers one gets the habit. Once I swore a good deal, and the curé, Mr. Tremblay, took me to task because I said before him that I was n't afraid of the devil. But there is an end of that too, Maria. All the summer I am to be working for two dollars and a half a day and you may be sure I shall save money. And in the autumn there will be no trouble finding a

job as foreman in a shanty with big wages. Next spring I shall have more than five hundred dollars saved, clear, and I shall come back.

Simple and unadorned as Hemon's French is, it is still as impossible to carry over the exact repercussion of his syllables as it is to transpose some air conceived for strings to the piano and hope to render all there was before. He is indeed wise who reads it first in French for the very homeliness of the kitchen, the sturdy humbleness of forest fortitude, the sigh of the wind, and whisper of the snow—all these make a somber music in the French which can be caught in no translation.

If it be wise to read the book in French, it is still wiser to read it on the shores of Lake St. John. Then go to Peribonka, where Hemon seems to live. So vividly has he expressed the sermon of the soil, so exactly caught the scene, so superbly brought his people into being, and so profoundly wrought his elements into art that he will be this people's Homer, an immortal. He knew what they think:

Nous sommes venus, il y a trois cents ans, et nous sommes restés. . . . Nous avions apporté d' outre-mer nos prières et nos chansons: elles sont toujours les mêmes. Nous avions apporté dans nos poitrines le coeur des hommes de notre pays, vaillant et vif, aussi prompt à la pitié qu' au rire, le coeur le plus humain

de tous les coeurs humains: il n' a pas changé. Nous avons marqué un plan de continent nouveau, de Gaspé à Montréal, de Saint-Jean d' Iberville à l' Ungava, en disant: Ici toutes les choses que nous avons apportées avec nous, notre culte, notre langue, nos vertus, et jusqu' à nos faiblesses deviennent des choses sacrées, intangible et qui devront demeurer jusqu' à la fin. Autour de nous des étrangers sont venus, qu' il nous plait d' appeler des barbares; ils ont pris presque tout le pouvoir; ils ont acquis presque tout l' argent; mais au pays de Quebec rien n' a changé. Rien ne changera, parce que nous sommes un témoignage. De nous-mêmes et de nos destinée nous n' avons compris clairement que ce devoir-là: persister; nous maintenir. Et nous nous sommes maintenus, peut-être afin que dans plusieurs siècles encore le monde se tourne vers nous et dise: Ces gens sont d' une race qui ne sait pas mourir . . . nous sommes un témoignâge. C' est pourquoi il faut rester dans la province ou nos pères sont restés, et vivre comme ils sont vecu, pour obéir au commandement inexprimé qui s' est formé dans leurs coeurs, qui a passé dans les notres et que nous devrons transmettre à notre tour à de nombreux enfants: Au pays de Quebec rien ne doit mourir et rien ne doit changer.

Photograph by Walter Rutherford.

PULP.

CHAPTER XI

HOW TO WAIT IN ROBERVAL

THERE are two species of people in the North—natives and strangers. Natives are people who answer questions, and strangers are those who believe what the natives say.

It took me a long while to naturalize myself, that is, to get over my state of credulity. If a hotel-man said that the night train left at 6 P. M., I believed him; and if somebody told me that it was so many miles to some place else, I believed him. I was always wrong.

I was most wrong about my flying permit, which was to have been sent me "at once." I had erroneously inferred that it would come to hand within a week, and still more erroneously that a week in Roberval would seem only seven days long. For some reason or other I still have a prejudice against hearing a village clock strike. It is too freshly reminiscent.

Phil's fix was less maddening. He was at least being paid for squandering his mortal hours so exclusively on Roberval. I was n't. Besides,

every morning I heard the tuning up of the flying-boat, saw it rise and flatten itself against the sky like a wild goose, and disappear into the land of my imagination. At evening I saw it return. For an official word I could have been returning with it. The dews of disappointment settled on my spirit, and other sights, other sounds, other places, Bagdad itself, would have seemed insipid to me. This is how a mule feels, I suppose, when it puts its ears back. Hereafter I shall always see that mules get what they crave.

Now, as the clay in me grows more malleable to the spirit I am more convinced of two things: that man sooner or later plucks the apple of his desire, so the desire be steadfast; and that he had better let the harvest-moment wait upon the Lord. I got my flights, and felicitous they were beyond expectation; but the intervening interval was of even more moment to me, as far as comprehension of the riches of the north goes, than a lifetime in the air. One cannot pick figs from thistles, but you can sometimes pick a friend from thorny surroundings. In Roberval I was to resuscitate my college days, find kindred spirits, and penetrate the veil of northern character, to enrich my life, when all the while I thought myself the dupe of time and a handful of honorable ministers.

At first I believe the greatest sorrow to Phil and me was that a man can't need to shave three

times a day. For, after our morning round—I with him to the freight station to see if there were a telegram, he with me to the post-office to seek my permit—after that we had to imagine what we should do; for events in Roberval did not occur spontaneously. And the barber-shop is the easiest thing to imagine, even though the barber there be quite unimaginable.

The world was now beautiful with spring's maturity. The rich fields that sloped upward to the southern horizon grew wavy with grass that was mainly clover, and full of four-leaves at that. Phil and I amused ourselves amassing them. One afternoon we got nearly twenty.

"Gosh," he exclaimed, "these ought to insure us freight and flights and fortune for the rest of our days."

Mine began the next morning. Colonel B. A. Scott arrived.

Colonel Scott, it seemed, was a combination of genius loci and pater-familias of Roberval. His very coming set the town agog. For untold successions of years he had been mayor of the place, when probably the only English-speaking man in town, and certainly the only Protestant; and to walk along the street with him was to take part in a sort of processional.

In those days that phantom of sudden wealth, masquerading in the general guise of development,

fluttered for a while over the great basin of St. John. There had been a hotel. There had been world-famous fishing for ouananiche in la Grande Décharge. Mr. Beemer's hostelry on one of the islands near the lake's eastern shore was visited by celebrated anglers from every land. The forests to the north were being laid out into pulpwood limits. There were no anxieties as to the future. Roberval would be a center, a great name, a thrill to the world. Colonel Scott was mayor.

But the vultures were already congregating. The hotel burned down. The ouananiche fishing was played out. Mr. Beemer closed his hostelry. The phantom of wealth proved will-o'-the-wisp and fluttered otherwhere. Colonel Scott resigned. Roberval came near being re-absorbed into eternal nothing.

There was only one ray of light. Colonel Scott occasionally came back, and with him plans for a new development, a harnessing of the rapids of la Grande Décharge, an immensely greater phantom of hugely greater wealth. Roberval might be flooded out of existence by the plans; but that could be got around. Wealth! Wealth!

Monsieur Albert Naud, Colonel Scott's secretary, who did his able best to make my stay in Roberval interesting and informed, told me this. No one can induce me to think that the French-Canadian does not make a fair business man, for

I have known Monsieur Naud . . . . He was snugly built, always trim in appearance, and lived with his wife and eight children in a cozy house. From a tiny office he managed the affairs of this great enterprise with implacable assiduity. Nobody could give me information of the country-side with anything approaching Monsieur Naud's accuracy. Thanks to his care I was to meet the two men of all men in the world who could guide me intelligently in the Isle d' Alma country; and thanks to his thoughtfulness Colonel Scott was apprised of my presence in the world, and I was invited on a trip to the mouth of la Grande Décharge, where the colonel had some fishing waters. I advise strangers visiting Roberval, and desiring verification of any so-called information they have received, to hunt up Monsieur Naud. They will find a gentleman and a student of their wants.

Sometimes the virtue of a day that has been spent indoors seems staled. That day would have surely been lost had it been spent in the barber chairs of Roberval. The colonel and a friend had chartered Cimon Simon and his tug and we were off early and out upon the lake, for which I had now got an affection. The scene was composed of three immensities: the expanse of lake, the wide blue coronal of mountains, and a profound transparency of sky. Among these our little vessel labored, like a water-bug crossing

the Mediterranean. If the sky was empty, existence seemed no longer so.

Neither was the tug. Inside, the colonel and his friend gloated over ambiguous lumps of baggage; while on the top rested four Indians and two canoes. It was my first glimpse of the Montagnais.

But that morning I was too contented to invent French questions. I lay out in the sun and looked. What liberty!

Lake St. John can give one transcendental thoughts, it lies so open to the day in its broad cup. From its midst you see the world, that has been so much with you, very faintly. Yet you are conscious of those kindly enclosing ranges, and are not so handed over to the bare infinities as you are in open ocean. The gravity of great waters and the melancholy of great woods are there in the hint, but not overwhelmingly. The friendly gods are not wanting.

I lay in the sun and stared into the North. Range behind range, low and soon lost in the blue veil of distance, made pictures for me, pictures that were concluded by the inner eye when my others failed. There, I thought, would I take Indian guide and go, and be for a while guest of that magnificent isolation. Would that be liberty? I wondered, and looked at the faces of the Indians, life-dwellers in it. Who enjoyed the real free-

dom? I, who despised the puerilities of civilization, but for whom civilization had built up, in the main, most of that which made life worthy of esteem? Or they, constrained by nothing except nature and the most elemental needs, who lived by their seven senses and the simple affections?

As we neared the eastern shore we chugged around lonely islands rendered lonelier by a sense of their former habitation, and came into a shallow bay, on the shores of which stood teams, one for the canoes, one for the luggage, one for the colonel. When one counts up the tugs and teams, vessels and vassals, it requires to lead the simple life for a week-end, it almost seems as if existence in naïve old New York were artless in comparison.

The skilful speed with which the quartet of guides lowered the canoes, transferred the duffle, and, standing up in the sterns of this craft, wafted their loads ashore had never been suggested in their somnolence atop the tug. There is a feline suggestion about the Indian.

The caravan on the yellow sands made a dusky pageant, as we turned away, that stored one more picture in my summer's gallery. And now was to be added another of the utmost magnificence. While we had been gaging our way amid the islands by the most careful piloting, for shoals are many and a shipwreck would be tedious there, Lake St. John, the lake of many moods, had de-

cided to show me, of her versatility, the mightiest of her summer manifestations. On the lazy wind great cumulus clouds had been drifting at their ease all morning; now they were marshaled, but not in the crowded manner of a land thunderstorm, rather as immense blue panels all around the lake. Out of these vast shields of steely blue, gray draperies of rain trailed away; and from the firmamental silence came drum-notes and the flicker of light on averted surfaces. More than ever now were we tiny, a wild duck on a twilight gulf, a leaf on a mill-pool. But there was no presage of harm in the gathered forces. It seemed to me almost like a vision, as if those titan-headed clouds, journeying in slow procession from the lake-lands of Athabasca and the Rainy River country toward the Labrador, epitomized the beauty, the might, the tameless splendor of the North. Even in summer her savageness was barely hidden by these misty draperies. Staged from low horizons to towering zenith, paled by the still shining sun almost to invisibility, and nearly mute despite their windy hearts, those ghostly giants marched to the music of drums unheard, stately as if it were a bridal of the gods. For an hour I lay there watching the vast circle of the sky in a sort of elemental dream, until, like the northern lights, they withdrew with a divine decorum into the abiding-place of the invisible.

Only then, as they were leaving, did a wind hit the waters, coming, I suppose, from the last swish of their garments. In five minutes Lake St. John was creamy with curling waves, in ten ridged in noisy tumult, in twenty almost calm again. But I had seen. I believed then what Cimon Simon had said about the dangers of the lake, and understood a little of the fears those on its borders own to.

In this connection Phil had said to me, as we stood looking at the totally unoccupied waters of the lake one afternoon: "Can you imagine that in the States? A perfectly good lake, a perfectly good afternoon, and young fellows with their perfectly good girls—at least we hope so—on the beach? Why, there 'd be fifty boats out there, and a hundred more where you could n't see 'em. Is n't that so? Well, why is it these Frenchmen don't utilize their opportunities?"

That afternoon Phil and I utilized our opportunities, which were our legs, in a (to him) extravagant manner, by walking the six miles out to Val Jalbert, where the falls of the Ouiatchouan used to fling themselves at one in a magnificent cataract, nearly 250 feet high. The water still churns itself to foam, but the beauty of the lily has been gilded by a pulp-mill. The juxtaposition is perfect.

Of course there can be no debate as to whether

one should have meat or melody in this world. Man cannot live, much less light his houses, by beauty alone. His ration must include some bread. But beauty is a yeast that leavens well. *If* the Ouiatchouan is spoiled so that the residents of Roberval can read Plato at night, that is one thing. Plato at least will teach them to economize on the amount of ugliness produced. I expect that the disfigurement of this splendid fall was defensible. All I ask is that the Robervalian emit a sigh when he sees what he has done, and that they don't use *all* the pulp produced by beauty crucified to make that sewage of the press called the Sunday supplement.

Unquestionably the most impressive part now is the pile of pulp-logs at its base, whose peak reaches above the falls. The logs are sawed above the falls, floated down to a boom, guided down a slip-way and heaped up. Another unquestionable impression is the view from the upper level. The surrounding country spreads like a fan before one, the fences of the much-fenced land acting as the fan-sticks, and the features of the scene varying from plot to plot like an Oriental fantasy.

Phil was here suddenly changed from apathy to a renewal of his youth and kid-hood by the sight of a faint trail on a perpendicular cliff near-by.

"Let's go up," he urged.

"Neither of my parents was a goat," I objected.

"Oh, come on!"

"And I hate to begin the line," I continued.

"It 's nothing much."

"Quite right; nothing at all—if you lose your hold."

"Well, I have n't walked a hundred miles out here for nothing. I 'll show you how easy it is. See there along that ledge. Will you follow?"

"No," I said, "if I 've got to go," and the beginning did look possible, "I speak to be killed first."

It really was n't bad, even when the insignificant ledge swung out over a gulf, three hundred feet to the bottom; though that distance, one might add, does n't make the rocks look soft. From the top we had a prospect over the north, already swathed in sunset hues, that suggested wigwam fires in Indian-land.

"Not a bad way to kill time, eh?" said Phil, cheerily.

"But it 's a little too obvious way to get rid of me," said I, looking down along the horrible crevices by which we had mounted, where not even conscientious brambles could take root. Long skinny fellows like Phil, never make allowance for their india-rubber reach. I talked entertainingly to him on other subjects until I judged it was too dark for even angels to risk a descent and then led him home another way.

CHAPTER XII

THE BEACH LIFE OF POINTE BLEUE

WAITING now became a more absorbing process the more we did of it. At first each additional burden of time which dawn brought to us on her golden platters seemed repulsive and unswallowable. But as we developed a technique of idleness we were able to enjoy each flagging hour as if it were charged with the stimulation of a circus. We sat on the porch of the Château, listening to the overtones of sloth until their sluggish sweetness nigh rendered us unfit for all future activity.

"Demain, peut-être," which was the freightman's smiling motto when Phil made his morning inquiry, became ours.

"Shall we go fishing?"

"Demain, peut-être," cooed Phil, torpid with content.

The iron of Roberval had entered into our souls, steeling us against exertion.

Heaven, who alone knows or understands what goes on in Roberval, probably has our calendar

jotted down somewhere to be answered for on the day of reckoning. Heaven certainly alone knows what the upshot would have been had not the tractor parts arrived.

Arrive they did. One morning, when our hair was almost long enough to cut again, Phil ran in, brushing the balmy dream from his forehead, saying excitedly: "They 've come, man, they 've come. Gosh! I 'm sorry." An hour later the yawning day had swallowed him up, and I was left alone exanimate and blue, with Roberval on my hands. O tempora!

It is astounding (to me) how resilient the spirit is. Put it in a really critical position, touch the fuse of desperation with the match of humor, or courage, or elation, and you soar. While I had company, the situation was not critical. Now, since all my instincts were anti-torpescent, it was. I tapped lightly three times on my sleeping initiative, and drew my sword. I would do something, the very first thing I thought of: fishing. In half an hour I was off up the Ouiatchouananische, a stream not quite so full of trout as it is of letters. But that afternoon I took in the slack of my self-respect, an article that soon grows limp with loafing. And on the way back I conceived the idea of renting a bicycle and riding out the few miles of lake-shore road to Pointe Bleue.

Did you ever set yourself a stint that did n't

matter, and on being balked in it, vow the completion of the enterprise? Well, that is what happened to my awakened donkey-like desire. Roberval did n't rent bicycles. I left few houses unentered. Either the bicycle owners could not comprehend my motive in wishing to ride forth, or else really did desire to put their machines to all the immediate uses, as alleged. Certainly I did n't rent one. But an hour before dusk a Samaritan in a hardware-store, whose name I would write in grateful letters of gold had I thought to ask it, lent me his, refusing money, itself an uncommon act among his saving race, and I wound westward slowly o'er the lea, emancipated.

Some day, I regret to predict, the circuit of St. John will be one of the world-famous drives on our picturesque planet. The small segment which conducted me along cliffs of gray Archæan rock that raised one high above the lake was an avenue of serenity. To the sunsetward, vermilion lights from late afternoon poured between the birches; on the lake-hand was stillness, as the earth spirits assembled for the vesper ceremonial. I coasted and came, with here and there a dun cottage in some trees, to the beach at Pointe Bleue, where, all unanticipated, another world awaited, the world of the woods Indian from the North. The

beach was dotted with encampments. No one had told me of this.

I have seen Indians on reservations, on basket-selling errands, in paid-for-in-advance dances, in circuses, and have stared at them—possibly beyond my money's worth. On this evening beach, I could no more have done that than I could have stalked up to Paderewski and asked to look at his hair. For these people were real, entitled to as much freedom from intrusion as, say, a novelist in his work-room. So I walked further along and sat down beneath a birch to get a permissible fill of the scene.

It was the sunset hour. From each group of tents blue smoke rose in a pearly column to a lazy heaven. Corpulent squaws, almost as dark as the kettles they were tending, bended and stirred and threaded their steps among the children. Here and there a huge black mongrel patrolled the strand, looking for a fat morsel of youngster; at least I would not have trusted one of the brutes near edible papooses. The men, not yet called to supper, were gathered in a circle, probably gambling. Nothing else in the world compels such acute attention from a group of men.

It was a sight belonging to any century these three past. For since the founding of the Hud-

son's Bay Co. in 1670, the annual custom of the Indians has been to congregate about the post during the months of early summer. There they would trade in last winter's catch of furs at their most noble leisure, wipe out the debt of the winter past, smoke and play cards and scheme for rum, while their women visited and talked the gossip of the long silence over. Then in the Moon When the Caribou Horns Cast Their Moss they visit the factor once more, go in debt once more for guns and ammunition, traps and blankets, and begin the long trip home. Some of the men at whom I was looking had come from Chibougamou, some from the upper Mistassini, three hundred miles away. My thoughts traversed the wilderness.

I had now grown accustomed to looking out on Lake St. John for beauty. Even during the imperceptible progress of these summer days, which were drying out the forest mosses in their ardor, I had caught unseen hands arranging unfamiliar colors on the monotony of waters. But that evening the dark was being welcomed with special preparations. Quietly one of those meditative showers mounted from the far-away waters and swept the far mountains in a cloud of rainbow hues, while near-by the shiny surface of the lake reflected heaven's panels of pearl and frescoes of rose. For an instant of time the world was

Photograph by Walter Rutherford.

HUDSON'S BAY CO., POINTE BLEUE.

dissolved in seas of exquisite color, to make the soul stand still and say, "I live." If the senses cannot appreciate the illimitable, at least they acquaint the spirit of it, and tell of the world beyond one's dwelling; even of the heaven beyond one's world.

But the Fates, now grown more than tractable, redoubled their largess. Out of the hyacinth west came two canoes, marching beneath that close, curt stroke like living things. It was another family arriving. The front canoe carried a young man, two children, a squaw and papoose in lap, one dog, and the father. The other was propelled by two young men, and had a load of duffle, a bundle of probably furs, and two dogs. Also two guns. Here before me floated the same pageant that intrigued Champlain. Now I saw the possible descendants of men whom Hudson, on that last wild venture, might have met. I was looking at the sum of the ages in these eastern woodlands. Barring the rifles and the company blankets, these dark wanderers might have been cousins to those who heard reports of the Norsemen's landing in the days before William the Conqueror. In their brains was stored the language of nature, in their souls the tradition of a thousand generations. They, like the primeval granite that underlay them, were the ancient of days, the genuine. To

see those canoes beached with manifest skill, the dogs leap, the children clamber after them, the chattering greetings of squaw to squaw, the dignified old hunters meeting with grave smiles—to see this soft-edged picture of the dusk was, for some unutterable reason, to sense the *lacrymæ rerum.* Progress must be by way of abandonment, was what the sight too clearly said, and at the moment the cost seemed vainly dear. Why seek wholeness further?

Presently color had fled from the sky and the Indians to their encampment. After swallowing some fruit that prescience had supplied, I pursued the beach-front to the last cottage, which was where the Hudson's Bay Co. factor lived. Its porch, unroofed, commanded the whole of Lake St. John, now mellowed into gray, and most of the sky, where the early stars were beginning to blossom. I knocked at the door.

I think I did not knock very boldly, and that was a mistake. A man on my general errand of intrusion for interrogation's sake must gird on his questions, stride up to the individual to be interviewed, knock him over, and with foot on chest, deliver himself in a few slashing sentences; then make his escape while able.

This time, so immersed had I been in the moving loveliness about me, I had knocked on the lion's door, planless, and tenderly. All my for-

titude had been put away for the night. I ought to have been picking pansies instead of confronting lions. The lion now stuck out his head with a "What is it?"

He was a Scotch lion, with a mane of steel-gray hair, an immense chest, eyebrows properly termed bushy if not hedgy, and under them, for all of his seventy-odd years, eyes with a cold gray sparkle, as if the depths of northern waters had caught sun. *"What is it?"* he had said.

Well, what? How could I say to a lion that I had just been mousing around, without his springing at and swallowing me. "I 'm writing a book on the Laurentian country," I said, meaning to have kept the fact hidden and suddenly feeling as if I would hardly be visible under a microscope. "And," I blundered on, "and I was wondering how the Hudson's Bay Co. accomplishes its—," a deep breath there, "its difficult business," and a swallow here, "so well."

"There 's nothing to it," growled the lion, though more blandly than he looked; "nothing to it at all."

"Then . . ." I said. You see I did not want my entire relation with the Hudson's Bay Co. to end with that statement. Yet it was difficult to drag up a question sufficiently significant to interest lions from my very roiled interior. So I said "Then, how—"

"Nothing to it," resumed the lion; "the Indian puts down his pelt. I pay him as much as I can for it. I want them to come back."

"Of course," I said hopefully.

"Then before they go in August they buy certain things in the company's store for which I trust them over the winter."

"And they always pay?"

"There is nothing else for them to do." I instinctively looked at the lion's paw. "But," he continued, "the company does not allow them the extravagance of large debts." A twinkle warmed the cold gray sparkle of his eyes. I drew my first breath. This was going to be fun. And then I put my foot in it, clean through the fun, by saying, "How large do they run, if I may ask?"

"The company does not permit us to disclose its business," said the lion. I thought of the pansy-bed, and wished I were in it. I wished I 'd brought a letter of introduction. "Why," thought I, "do I progress from blunder to blunder on this trip? Why can I make no happy exceptions to my unhappy rule, and deviate just once into the right way of treating officials?" There was nothing more, really, that I felt would make an appropriate subject to ask about, and I began, lugubriously, to say farewell.

"Won't you come in and have a smoke?" said the lion.

"Nothing," says Amiel or Shakespeare, "nothing is more characteristic of a man than the manner in which he behaves toward fools." And nothing could have been more characteristically Scotch than my evening with Mr. Hamilton. One always has to mount the stile to meet a Scot; but once met, they are the salt of earth at its saltiest.

A coolness was drifting in from the lake, so we had a fire. We had cigars. We had refreshment, and talk. The features of the lion faded into those of a genial, shrewd old man, the last quality of whom was age. He had come "out" at the age of eighteen, and for fifty-five years had been storing experiences and wisdom. He told me of his fishings on the Saguenay and huntings around the lake, of his dealings with the Indians, and many a funny bit of gossip about his neighbors, and of his post when it had been more nearly a boundary post. Now there were eight companies competing for the furs. No wonder it takes the lionesque to hold the company's own.

We sat in a little den, whose windows opened on the lake. The walls held books. It was not hard to conjure the graying man, sitting there the long winter evenings through, thinking of times past, and possibly the Time to come, while northeasters hurled the snows across the lake. He had pointed out a mark, higher than the house, which the drifts reached. Nor was it difficult to

know how the H. B. C. had survived the vicissitudes of 250 years, with such veteran wisdom, such loyalty grown gray in service, such courage for its own. They are dead indeed who do not thrill at the feats of the pathfinders, for the romance of fur has been as thrillful as ever was the romance of gold, and cleaner. That was a great night for me, when I sat beneath one of the roofs of the great company, listening to tales from an elder among its servants.

CHAPTER XIII

I GO FROM WORLD TO WORLD

SOMETIMES in the woods it is difficult to remember the date. Saturdays look so much like Tuesdays there. But one is rarely muddled as to the century. Even the most capricious memory usually can hit it within a hundred years.

Yet when I woke the next morning it was to stand on the shores of the seventeenth century looking forth into aboriginal time. My ears on going to sleep had been full of Prince Rupert and his merchants-adventurers. On waking they were filled with the rippling language of the Montagnais. Dressing, I could look across the broad bay to distant Roberval, where the people were still lovingly considering the 1600s; and as I did look, the flying-boat, that presage of our next era, took the air, like a sort of gasolene griffin. This was indeed a mêlée of the ages.

From force of habit I put on the knickers that I had doffed the night before. They seemed related to the knee-breeches of which I had been hearing. Knickers—knee-breeches—breech-

clout; who will say there is not poetry in pants? I was certainly glad that I was not to make my entrance into Indian-land in a pair of long trousers with a razor-like crease. But I would not have been stared at; not if I had appeared in a roller-towel. For perfect manners I commend you to Pointe Bleue.

The perfect manners are not restricted to the reds. Monsieur Armand Tessier, the government agent, smiled down my list of questions; and then handed me over to Mr. Joseph Kurtness, a sort of resident law and order personage, who certainly acquitted himself as a practical diplomat. Mr. Kurtness, besides being handsome and a war-hero, knew English. And on him, as on Mr. Abyberg, I fell tooth and claw, living questionnaire that I am, and extracted satisfaction from him as a child would doughnuts from the pantry.

"Yes, I know that country. You travel by the Ouiatchouanische to La Croche and down that to the St. Maurice. A very good trip."

"Yes, you can do that, too. Paddle up the Ashuapmouchouan, here, around the Point, beyond a Portage à l' Ours, to Pomonka Falls. Then it is a hard trip across country to Lac à Jim, down the outlet to the Washiemska, to the Mistassini, and home. A long trip."

"Yes, I can tell you of that, though I have

never taken it. You go up the Peribonka to Lac Tschatogama and—"

He was indefatigable, and, as once before in the office of the good Swiss, I was snowed in with routes. This time with a difference. I was no longer frantic to get somewhere. I was already there. Pointe Bleue, Joseph Kurtness's house itself, was place enough. I stayed to lunch. One of the handsomest girls I have ever seen, berry-brown and shining-eyed and built like a handmaid to Pocahontas, served it. Neither white poets nor art herself can ever sufficiently admire in rime or memorial the dignity and beauty of this already legendary race. Its best must have been a peerless people. Now, to be sure, we are collecting museumfuls of shards and scraps, are doing into pamphlets the race that stumbled and fell against the white steam-roller. We are doing these things with gasping zeal. But what puerile economy! I wonder when will come a man so great that he can reverse the sequence of human affairs for good; can force us to put the horse before the cart, disarmament before the war, the guardian before the game's extermination, the warden before the forest-fire, and remorse before Cain's jealous blows. The New World certainly has been the laboratory of folly, in which Europe, too consistent to modify her past when chance was given, has plied her rules

of greed. If conscience meet conscience in another world, the white may glow with shame, the red shine white.

That morning on the beach at Pointe Bleue I was glad that the blood of the red race still ran undiluted in a few surviving. Mr. Kurtness took me from group to group, and we talked, the men and I, in our comfortable French, which might have seemed obscure to a Parisian, but by some miracle was mutually comprehended.

One group was fixing up a bark-canoe, torn by the teeth of the upper Mistassini. Another was laying out its skins. The family which had arrived the night before were enlarging their quarters, so that their children might have room as well as the dogs. The beach was infested with dogs, and they, I should judge, with something else; yet the camp seemed clean enough, and the sleeping papooses, polished till they shone, would have put the pride of city mothers to the blush.

What young men there were seemed engaged in a chronic card-game. The youngsters played clumsily at ball, or ran around with bows and arrows threatening sparrows with ferocious valor. The women were perpetually cooking something, washing the children, visiting one another's homes, or carrying wood home from the shore. The current conception of feminism did not seem to have penetrated to the rim of Lake

St. John, at least not to the extent of aiding with the chores.

Probably it was the exceptional sight of seeing an Indian youth helping a squaw with a large log that impressed my first attention. Looking once at Matemek one looked again. There was an ingratiating light in his countenance that the dusky circle about the gambling blanket could not show. He was not exceptionally tall nor strong-looking, but he had able shoulders, and a suspicion of a smile as he handled the log. Most of the male beach-dwellers were dour as Scot could wish.

"Let me." I said, offering a hand. He did smile, showing more good teeth than there are in a French-Canadian town. We three got the log to camp. They thanked me. But I was too keen for gossip to get out.

"Do you live far?" I asked.

"Far, very far. Up the Mistassini."

"Trapping, I suppose. Alone?"

"With my father."

"What do you get?" For want of other questions, though I knew well.

"Beaver, otter," he said, "and muskrat, mink, all the animals. *What do you do?*"

Now let me tell you, that was a dramatic shock to me. You see, the dead do not ask questions. And, as far as interest in the other fellow goes, most savages you meet are dead, mere corpses of

curiosity. Beauty is only skin-deep; the rest of us is vanity. I had got so used to interrogating the habitant, centered in his own vortex, and never regarding me as equally alive and possibly interesting that I did not expect reciprocation. So when this upstanding savage from the North had the courtesy to suggest that I, too, mattered, my egotism at once warmed to him.

Next morning we pushed off from the beach in Matamek's canoe. So much, so suddenly, had yet happened easily, as all true adventures should. After a cigarette with Matamek on our salvaged log I had inquired more about the Mistassini, and began to piece together a plan in the planning-room of my cerebellum. Supper-time at the Harkness's interrupted a tale of Matamek's winter life of which I determined to hear more. That and the plan went together. I said to Mr. Harkness:

"I think of all your trips the one up the Mistassini will do most for me. I can see Indian woodmanship, can visit the great falls, and try for ouananiche in the pools there, and can see the Trappist monastery."

"Just now the best guides are off with Colonel Scott. I am sorry."

"How about Matamek?"

"He 's little more than a boy. He is a good

boy, though, strong, and if he tells you something it will be true."

"The boy thinks," I said.

"Yes, he is a good boy," said Mr. Harkness. and so it happened that, after I had telephoned Roberval in fruitless inquiry for that permit, and had bought stores of Mr. Hamilton with Matamek in council, we launched our canoe on a seraphic lake at six-thirty of the clock. The month was still June. It was only of the century that I was in doubt.

During that day we said nothing. Have you ever started on a quest, to wake at some moment to the wondering whether you are a lineal descendant of the original Goose? It is one of my favorite fantasies. Look at us more closely. There was I plodding across a lake of extraordinary flatness and length, committed to the care of an unknown red-man, due to spend several nights in the wilderness for which we had but hastily prepared. How did I know that—and then followed through my mind all the things that might happen, the chief of which was boredom. I had come for information. The sage had not opened his lips.

Furthermore the sun was hot. Forest-fires had created a drooping haze that dulled the shore-lines but quenched none of the sun.

Rather did it imprison the heat, once delivered, and apparently condense it into a turgid atmosphere that sat heavily upon the water. I tried not to be outdone at the bow paddle by a boy. But he was Nimrod's own, and driving our laden canoe through the water did not seem to tire him. As vigorously as I could, I pulled at the liquid with my stave. There was such lots of it ahead!

The broad mouth of the Ashuapmouchouan lay reeking with heat at our right. Noon shot arrows of blunted fire upon us from on high. The breathless shimmering beaches of the Mistassini seemed desperately far. Matamek uttered no sound, but dug his paddle into the inert lake.

"Will you eat something;" I asked.

"No. Too hot."

"Then, by all the gods, let 's smoke."

We smoked in silence; and it was then that Hope interrupted her usual task and said to me, "Well, really, are n't we fools?"

"We 'll see," I whispered to her. I have some pride; then aloud, "What are you thinking about, Matamek?"

"Winter." He said. I looked at him in surprise. He meant it. "It is winter in my thoughts," he continued. "Cold air comes in through where the tent is tied. My feet are cold, even in the furry moccasins. The little spruces

crack with the frost. Ugh! I shiver. The fire is nearly out. I cannot like to unroll the blankets to fix it."

"Stop!" I laughed, "you 'll give me a chill. It 's such a sudden change."

He laughed, and the ice was broken. He chattered now. It was from deference of my being his employer that he had been silent. Hope resumed her office within me, aided now by certainty. The difficult moment when equals meet equals among the employer and employed was past. Class is the most obvious outcome of an inequal world. But reserve, for class' sake, is unintelligent. War, I think, is the stupidest of all the conventions; but snobbishness comes next. And mental snobbishness is the ne plus ultra of its kind. If I had got into that canoe considering that I was, intellectually, cleverer than Matamek, the belief was beginning to wane. "I am now digging a path through the snow," said I to myself as I picked up the paddle.

The rest of the day seemed short, for companionship can cut the monotony of travel incredibly. A good gossip will foreshorten the hours better than the most virtuous reflections; and I would rather do a journey with brigands, who have some reminiscences, than with the best educated mummer in the world. We made camp, not at the Mistassini's mouth, which is sandy, brushy,

and gnatty, but a little way up where the banks begin to rise into birch forest.

We had brought no tent, for Matamek had insisted that there would be no rain for our five days; and, if there should be, I had thought it would be more interesting to watch his discomfiture than be ever so patently prepared. Neither had we my fly-tent. But we had an ax, and an indefinite amount of beach-wood, and green-blue plumy balsam, and a wizard of the wilderness to combine these elements into bed, and shelter and cook-fire. For the flies, Matamek had me cut some long marsh-grass. Then when dusk approached he made mounds of coal from the supper-fire on either side of our balsam-bough lounge, and putting a few wisps of this green hay upon them, we were plentifully supplied with acrid smoke. It was a night of contentment well advanced beyond the ordinary; not the quiescent sort of a trout-and-bacon supper, nor only the greater contentment of tired muscles, an objective reached, and a day well passed. Rather within me there bubbled springs of happiness, ever welling up into cool grottoes of the spirit. It was the incomparable moment of the month. To the North the wilderness, around me the savage beauty of desolation that thrilled like a rising east wind in a lonely cabin's eaves, and

by me the child of curious habitudes, made strange and beautiful in the sunset light of his race.

I asked him to tell me about the life he led in winter. Pieced together, this is what he said: "It is all trapping, Monsieur, or getting ready to trap. You see my father has a trap-line two days long, for he is getting old. Mine is three days. That is the most fun of the year, to go along wondering what you have in the trap; it is more fun than fishing even."

"What do you carry, Matamek? Begin at the beginning."

"The beginning is getting ready. Your squaw or your mother does up a bit of tea and salt and bread for three days. You see to it that she has the fry-pan clean, and you take a blanket. Two if it is cold. My father and I have a piece of bush as big as half the distance we have come." (I found out that a family usually keeps about a hundred square miles for its use in Matamek's country of the upper Mistassini. Areas vary with the nearness to civilization and the size of the family. As much as 300 square miles is not an unheard-of area to be trapped over.)

"My father had our place from his father, and my son shall have it from me."

"Have you any hopes of a son?" I asked.

His eyes glinted as he laughed. "Oh! There will be one. Two, three perhaps. I have not found my woman yet."

"But you are getting old, Matamek." The boy was verging on nineteen.

"Not so old. My father married when he had eighteen years. But there were more choices. I have not seen her yet. When I see her I shall know it is my woman."

Here, at least, was a difference between moccasins and street leathers.

"How, Matamek?"

He looked at me. "Will it not be like seeing a salmon in a pool, Monsieur?"

"Very like," I ventured, and since then I have often thought of Matamek's figure for the tumultuous heart.

Also, judging from what Matamek told me, the squaw must have all the feelings of the captured fish. Her duty is to do everything that is distasteful to her lord and captor, such as keeping up the wood-supply, skinning the game that is brought in, being cook and seamstress and nursemaid. The children in an Indian family are kept washed and well and instructed. Recently their instructions have included the religious formulæ of the church. The matter of menus is becoming more complicated since the Indians have acquired a taste for bread. It used to be that they ate only

game and fish, drank broth made from game instead of tea, and had no flour, no vegetables. But civilization spreads like iris-colored oil on virgin waters. Recently I heard of an old Indian carrying back into the primeval forest an electric washing-machine, unloaded upon him, I suppose, by the eloquence of some audacious drummer. May that drummer's chore in purgatory be a perpetual endeavor to start the thing—preferably by a crank.

That evening I learned much more, but only admiration, of Matamek and his people; and long after he had curled up and sent his spirit a-voyaging on parole, my wakeful brain refused to dismiss any of my senses for the night. It did the rounds as busily as a competent night-watchman saying, "Ears, what was that? Some wanderer calling through the night?" For the voices of the Mistassini came now and then like the whisperings of passers-by below me. And again, "Eyes, look! Did that shape move?" For mists as tenuous as star shadows formed before my flagging eyes and beckoned. But despite my complaints, my brain, stimulated by our talk, or by the opportune stillness of the disembodied world, whipped up my senses to a delicate acuteness. Like bees they stored up the honey of the rare, rare moment for memory to feed on at a scarcer time. And if a man will listen to the hum

of the hive contentedly without fear of weariness on the morrow, letting the little bee-senses bring him the whiff of distant-passing fox, or that great motif of all un-human, lonely things, the owl's mating cry—if he'll lie there on the green, cool banks of sleep, and let himself be happy, nature will draw up the coverlets of slumber, the little bees will hive finally in the dusk of consciousness, and his spirit will steal forth for its resting-time. This is as the gods planned it long ago.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MIDDLE AGES ONCE MORE

I WOKE to look into Matamek's face smiling through a cloud of pipe-smoke which the morning was too lazy to blow away. He was sitting by a new-laid fire, a very small one. Behind him shone the glare of a day already in its teens, a lusty hot youth of a day who had set out to frizzle the country in its own juices.

"Why did n't you wake me, O Matamek?"

"You were having a good sleep-feast. It is not good to wake with your sleep undigested."

"I had only four hours at that."

"It is enough for the bow paddle," said my boy. He was in good spirits.

"Here goes for a swim. That 'll make it five hours." A cold bath is as good as an extra nap; and the Mistassini was cold, despite the solstice's best efforts.

I wish people knew how to get intoxicated aright. The exhilaration of seeing the old proportions dwindle, of knowing you are more than others think you, of seeing a path, and an easy

one at that, up over the heights ahead—this is living in clear air, whereas most people are content with the stuffiness of actuality. Only when intoxicated can you glimpse the career that becomes you.

But I am not speaking of whisky, with its groundless egotisms, its poisons that rob Peter to pay some outsider, Paul, its senile leerings and its inevitable tragedy. I 'm speaking of the normal senses, lifted off the common ground by the sudden sight of snow-clad peaks, by the handwriting on an envelope, by even a cold plunge in a savage Eden. For those who have their senses at concert pitch have but to touch the keys. They need not the mallets of sensuality to make their music with. Baudelaire knew better than he practised. His dictum was, "One should always be in a state of drunkenness—either with wine, or poetry, or virtue." Delete always and write some time, delete wine and write health, and you will sing at your work, dream happily, and come to your life's harvest with assurance. God, from Whom all blessings flow, had poured the elixir of life into my bath that morning.

The appearance of the Mistassini betokens no divine connections; in fact it is the most God-deserted river that ever wandered disconsolately across a landscape. We labored against a sullen current and around curves for breezeless hours.

The curves were about as regular and complete as if the Creator had used an elongated bed-spring for model. I know not to what Montagnais demons did Matamek entrust the future care of the stream; but I would have delivered it, from source to mouth, jarred and canned, to my devil before we had gone five miles. If any one wishes a complete knowledge of sand-banks, or how a broiling summer's day acts on a shadeless river, or what moth-eaten trees look like, I then advise the lower Mistassini.

We were content to make our camp that night just below the junction of three rivers, the Rat, the Mistassibi, and ours. Above the great cascades sat the tiny village of Mistassini, where the Trappists had a monastery. By some strange suggestion that the dim walls made to us at dusk, our talk that night came back to the question I had pondered that other day on wide St. John, when those silent Montagnais seemed to have assumed temporary serfdom with a sullen proud assent, as though they were the free and their employer slave.

"Matamek," I said, "what is it you wish to be?"

"A man who knows where the beaver are," he said promptly.

"And what else?"

"A man with descendants."

"And what else?"

"A man who can bend his grandmother." He meant that he wished to be able in argument.

"And what else?"

He could think of nothing farther, so I went on: "You want always a feeling that you are free, don't you Matamek; to know that nothing binds you?"

"I am free. My father now asks me, 'Is this possible, Matamek?' I am free enough."

"I was wondering," said I, "whether you or I come the nearest to having perfect freedom. I shall tell you of myself and we 'll judge. Instead of hunting animals, which may or not be there to hunt, I make my living hunting up truths about people and places and putting them on paper. There is always much paper, there are always many truths. I cannot starve, you might say. Yet, to be exact, there are thousands of other men doing the same. If they find the places or the truths first and say them better, I can starve."

"It is the same for both of us," said Matamek sagely. He was now interested.

"All right. So far we are equally free to live, if we are equally able to make our living. But think now of the way we live; which is the freer? Take our bodies. You live in the bush and you get sick how often?"

"Only at Pointe Bleue. There is balsam in the bush."

"In the city, men are often sick, and even the well men rarely know the big health that can laugh at portages and rain. Yet in the city, Matamek, our doctors can make us glasses for weak eyes, and cure aching teeth, and take out parts of the body that cause pain, and straighten bones and bring drowned men back to life. I think again we are equally free in our bodies, don't you?"

"Do you want to wrestle?" asked Matamek, with a twinkle in his eye. "We could see." I wish you could have heard the quiet humor in his voice.

"It is settled," I said; "we are equally free in the right to live and in the strength to live, and just because you can throw me into the river means nothing, for I can find white wrestlers who could tie you into knots. What I want to find is whether we are equally free in everything. Take the life in here." And I touched my head.

Matamek was too polite to say he did not understand this last. So I said: "Take the string of our thoughts for a whole day, Matamek. What do you think about in the bush?"

"At night I think about what I am going to do the next day; and the next day I do it. That is all. I look much, think little."

"Exactly. You are not bothered by a thousand worries, for your work is straightforward work. What this person will think about it, or that person, does n't influence you. No wonder you have a clear head. You seem freer than I, Matamek. But wait. If you want advice you can go only to your father. I can go to wise men who lived a thousand years ago and ask them."

"How is that?" he asked quickly.

"They have stored their advice in books, and we store the books in libraries. I can find out what the wisest men have thought and felt and done, when they were in the same troubles as myself. That should make me able to deal wisely with happenings. And the less ignorant a man is when something happens, the freer he is. Is n't that so, Matamek?"

"You have more knowledge," he said quietly.

"And so more freedom? Do you admit it?"

"No!" he said vigorously. "Look, Monsieur. You cover the thing with words, but what is the truth? You come to me and say, 'Matamek, I like this, I like that, I wish I could do these things forever; what would I give to be able?' That is what you said yesterday, to-day, was n't it, Monsieur?"

He had me there. He went on: "Well, I do these things. I do not say to you, 'O, Monsieur, if I could only wear your shoes, if I could only

sleep in house-boxes, if I could only have a squaw.' I am content. I like moccasins, and I will have my squaw next year. You are much older. Why do you not bring your squaw with you?"

Again he had me. I explained a little of the difficulty that the professional man has in equipping himself with and maintaining a squaw.

"That is it," he said delightedly, for he was now warmed to the debate. "You say you are more free than Matamek, and you cannot move without money, cannot have a squaw because she has to be bought, cannot take this trip unless you give Matamek money. But I take the trip, I can have a squaw, I can move. I am free. I need money only for the priest."

"Then I am ahead of you there," said I heartily; "my worship is free."

He shot a look of compassion on me and said: "Do not think that I worship to the priest. That is a little game we have to play, Monsieur. Here is my worship." And he pointed out into the dark beyond our fire. "It is all spirit-land. Why hide beneath a church to worship? The priests says this, my father that. They confuse me."

"What do you believe?"

"I know," he said, "one thing. I know there is a spirit in this tree, in that water, in the great

bush that is son of the Great Spirit. Our stories say that these spirits are luck-bringers and disease-bringers. I shall not tell my descendants that, for I do not know it. I do know if you tell your hunting secrets in the bush, that the leaves whisper it to the game." Matamek believed this. I could not get him to talk of his trapping except on the beach at Pointe Bleue where there are no trees.

"Do you really think so?" I asked.

"I have had it happen. Some day I shall tell you. But ought we not to sleep? There are portages to-morrow."

And so we turned in without deciding which of us was the freer. Physically, I think Matamek had the lead; spiritually we tied; mentally my horizons were larger; and morally? What scales can weigh the inner man? Happiness, I contend, is the sum of a man's loves; and happiness lends wings, and wings give liberties hitherto unsuspected. So he that loves the most is the most free. Before I could total up our respective affections I was sound asleep.

The sun, potent enough the day before, now, without the loss of an hour from dawn, began to scorch everything in sight that was not nimble enough to escape. No leaf on the birch above us stirred. Matamek was lying on his blanket, his

shirt half off, like a Tait McKenzie sculpture. I ransacked my mind for a manly excuse for postponing those portages. Matamek was more skilful at that; for he pointed to the Monastery St. Michel de Mistassini in the glowing distance and said, "They have been up since one o'clock."

"One o'clock this morning?" I repeated incredulously.

The Indian nodded.

"What on earth for?"

"What in heaven for, Monsieur," smiled Matamek. "It is their religion."

"Let 's investigate it," I offered. "Perhaps we may want to join them, Matamek." The broadest smile that had yet divided his firm lips swept the boy's fine face. "Perhaps," he said, "but we look first."

The village of Mistassini owes its existence to *L'Ordre de la Trappe;* but before that much was due to the Lord. I doubt if any village in the flat-lands of Canada has a location more charmingly designed by nature. Meadows rise to wooded hills, rivers lull the passing hours to sleep with crooning waters, cascades lift the heart with their wild motion, and the silences of the endless North still it again.

In 1891 when the first monks sought a life of seclusion north of Lake St. John they must have congratulated themselves on this desert. Aside

from the passings of the Indians down the river and the music of the owls at night, there was nothing to interrupt them in the exercise of their perpetual contrition. The Government gave them six thousand acres, almost as unnecessary, however, as awarding air to windmills. Forty miles to the south lay Roberval's unadventurous village. To the north lay most of the 450,000,000 acres which constitute Quebec Province, mainly vacant. Certainly for people distressed with the world this was a felicitous asylum. *Son Eminence le Cardinal Taschereau* authorized *sa Grandeur Monseigneur Bégin* to press *le Révérend Père Abbé* to accede to the desires of *l'Honorable Monsieur Mercier* on the subject of raising funds. The adhesion of the faithful was assumed, and le Monastère de Mistassini came to blossom in the wilderness by the satisfactory, if not very original, miracle of the usual methods.

The ancient monastery with its low buildings sheltered by a bank, the great rapids of the Mistassini plunging by,—the agricultural busy-ness about, must have been a picture cosily human, too human perhaps for these monks, who in the name of Christ had set about mortifying their bodies and insulting all their senses. So they built a grim three-story house, of a style suited to cities, on the saddle of a hill, which struck hands with all the winds; and under this roof,

bristling with the cross, continued their career of abstinence. At its door, shortly before noon I knocked, Matamek following. We had heard of the hospitality of the Trappists, and judged that a meal with them would be an interesting if not a nourishing affair.

The door was opened by a cenobite, dressed in the garb projected by John the Baptist,—a long whitish robe, with a girdle, and looking the costume cenobitic par excellence. We were invited into a strait-sided room where I explained our visit. During my stay under that roof I determined to keep myself in a sympathetic frame of mind. But my flesh crawled, so silent, so gloomy the interior as compared with the friendly, overflowing day outside. I was thankful for my savage familiar standing in impenetrable thought beside me.

Yet the appearance of our host should have allayed uneasiness. His hair happened to be the color of Christ's in the pictures and was tonsured into an invisible halo. His countenance had much of the Christlike in it, whether from much pondering on His image, or from fasting, or from the inner cultivation of the fundamentals of Christian precept. But there was something missing, some lack of warm and surging love which separated this countenance from Christ's as a simian's is separated from his keeper's.

There were sixty inmates at present, we were told, but eight of them were ill and the head monk thought it better that we have lunch elsewhere. I suppose that the eight had a little overdone the abstinence. It must be dangerous to indulge in riotous fasting when you are living on a mere string as it is. So Matamek and I left for the village and a square meal. And at two we again relinquished the sun in order to have the cistercian life explained. Meanwhile I had had a very interesting talk with Matamek on religion. I think we both rather braced ourselves against reëntering that human vault. We were taken in charge by still another apostolic-looking monk.

Please imagine yourself now accompanying Matamek and me. We are walking with a follower of St. Benoit. It is the year 1100. We do not talk. By special dispensation, possibly in the hopes of a convert, our cicerone can. We hear first about the daily schedule. These men rise each morning at two o'clock. I would give my Corona to know whether they have an honest seraphic glee in their bosoms then, or an honest and more comprehensible gloom. On Sundays the hour is one; and, for special treat, on holidays it is midnight.

They pray to the Virgin for thirty minutes, then to God for an hour, and so on, miscellaneously, until seven, whereupon breakfast, which is a

Photograph by Walter Rutherford.

MONASTÈRE DE NOTRE DAME DU MISTASSINI.

horribly literal affair. It is not a matter of fruit and cereal, eggs and bacon and buttered toast and honey with coffee and rich cream—most of which delicacies these saints produce upon their desert. They are allowed bread and water; just enough bread to push life forward.

It is over by 7:15, when another office is said, whereupon the monks of the choir go to manual labor in the *boulangerie* or the *cordonnerie* or the *poulailler* or *grange* or *étables* or *écuries* or most often in the fields, until 12:15, when more ceremony.

At two they file, speechless, into a basement dining-room, whose darkness, stone floor, boards for table, and rigorous stools would dampen one's enthusiasm for a Thanksgiving dinner. A tin of soup is cooling before each place. But, in case the self in a man's body should perk up its head for a second's wistful satisfaction, they are provided with the means to drive it back. At the overseer's hammer, each monk draws his knotted whip and scourges himself on legs and shoulders till the overseer gives the signal to quit. Following this appetizer come cabbage and onions and more bread and water, along with this reflection, "This life is nothing, eternity is everything," to the first part of which I would by then be in a condition to subscribe.

There follows more manual labor until vespers

at 4:45; when, after studies and more prayers and some water and bread, these gentle souls betake themselves to a hard bed, ensconced in a dormitory's niche, at seven. Then, if they have no sins of the day to do penance for, they may sleep until two again, whereupon begins again this amazing routine.

As we followed our pussy-footed guide, who lifted latches (made of wood to prevent noise and facilitate spying), from cell to cell, I glanced often at Matamek's immobile face to glean his impression. Once when a brown-robed wraith of a cenobite slunk about a corner to avoid us,—his kind but how unlike!—Matamek looked at me as if to say, "Did you see that rat?" But most of the time he was impressed, as was I, by the fearful erasement of human joy, which these men accomplished with a sort of terrible satisfaction.

When we had seen the room of meditation, the airless dormitory, and the library outfitted with "Lives of the Saints" which could instigate, I should think, hardly a more prodigious penance than these moderns were undergoing, we were taken downstairs where we could talk; and I found out the principles of the Trappist régime. There are five:

The first is based on a community life hinted at in the New Testament. St. Benoit, the founder, wanted to go the Acts one better, however, by

generating a *fortissimum genus monachorum,* a species of believers whose incredible austerity might astonish even the infidel. So he advocated that they have everything in common, that they abolish the personal, until the self should be lost in the whole. Good St. Benoit admitted that it might be painful, that the soul might long for liberty and isolation or the personal intimacies. But away with these if a monk would elevate himself to God!

To aggravate the effect of perpetual contact they promulgated a law of perpetual silence. Perpetual, mind you! Thus, while ever with your fellows, you might ever be with God. It is like living ever at the bottom of a Cistercian well. But by doing this the monks follow to the letter the sixth chapter of the Order of St. Benoit. It is their golden rule, and I must admit they affirm it in golden words: "Le silence est l' entretien de la divinité, le language des anges, l' éloquence du ciel, l' art de persuader Dieu, l' ornement des solitudes sacrées, le sommeil des sages qui veillent, la plus solide nourriture de la providence, le lit des vertus; en un mot la paix et la grace se trouvent dans le sejour d' un silence bien gardé." To me they seemed like souls bottled in the wine-cellar of the Lord. The devil in me longed to hear one blow his cork.

This uninterruptible silence certainly is favor-

able to prayer; particularly as news of the world, literature, the progress of science, or any of those things which strengthen curiosity (that deadly enemy of their God) all tend to poverty of thought. If one has nothing to think about while hoeing potatoes one must pray. So the divine office is celebrated incessantly. They can whip their lips if not their souls into a frenzy of activity; and they do it.

But praying can conceivably degenerate into a lazy man's job, so the far-seeing St. Benoit advocated a redoubtable routine of manual labor, interpersed with theological studies, deemed harmless to one's vanity. Curiosity, avarice, and pride are the sure result of other reading.

The fifth tenet of the Trappist concerns penance. At first blush it seemed to me superfluous. The life of perpetual elbowing one's neighbor, without ever exchanging a good morning with him, the life of endless prayer and never-to-be-ended work seemed so moderately tempered with self-gratification as to make the need for penance, or even penitence, unnecessary. I was interested in reading in one of their tracts about the regulation of the diet. After exhorting a little more crucifixion of the body during the festivals (ironic term) by subsisting on their two ounces of bread and their bowl of water the writer, ravished by the temperate idea, breaks out into this valedic-

tory: "O happy monks! one can say, who fast so vehemently, who make of your fasting your nourishment. O happy stewards! who nourish your world so cheaply, and are never tempted to make economies on this spiritual pittance," etc., etc., for an ecstatic page. What verbal wreaths would he not have laid on the eight invalids who had lately been too engrossed in starving themselves to heed their ebbing strength!

At length Matamek and I were escorted into the day. The sun put its warm arms about us, and the Being, whom Matamek called the Great Spirit and I call God, welcomed us back. I thought of David, also used to working in the fields as these men, and able to say, "The earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." "The fulness thereof," thought I, and like a rainbow across a receding storm the words pictured for me ocean-going ships, orchestras, firesides, adventure, the gateways of music, home. With my lips I was saying farewell to our guide. He asked me to say a prayer for him. He seemed almost to be begging for that prayer. I cannot say that he seemed unhappy. I offered him a tip. He took it. And the door of his prison jarred to, leaving us out there in the fulness thereof.

"Come, Matamek, I'll race you to the river," I said.

CHAPTER XV

SOARING

CIVILIZATION used to advance by means of a Marquette here, a Daniel Boone there, with a handful of followers the next year if practicable. To-day civilization makes massed attack on the wilderness, causing it to blossom a few weeks later with real-estate offices, roaches, and cathedrals.

There I was in northernmost Mistassini with not a garage, a telephone, or even a pig-sty between me and the Pole. Yet that precocious village had all three. At least, I am sure of the pig-sties, and in the house which gave you food, when all the cenobites were ill, there was a telephone, on which if you rang and wrangled long enough you could converse with Roberval. This, by some sudden flare of inspiration, I did, and found from Captain Kenny of the air station that my permit had arrived. What a miserable dilemma! Here I was leaning over the edge of civilization, expecting to lose my balance in it with my Indian. If I persisted I might lose my flight as well.

"That is all right," the captain was saying in his quiet way, "we 're thinking of making a cache on the Rat to-morrow and can pick you up," and after he had instructed me where to wait I left the room, walking on air—a sort of preliminary aviation.

"Haul me down, Matamek; we 've got to make plans," but in the intervals of planning I would find myself off ground.

Next morning we were early at the rendezvous, a lagoon-like stretch of river which had almost finished its errand of message-bringing from the mystic North. The canoe, whose movement beneath the hand of Matamek was like the breathing of a beautiful steed, carried a very imperturbable Indian, wrapped in the mantle of racial silence, and a not imperturbable me. For I was now hedged about with the very stuff of which my dreams had been made, listening for that far-away whir of the great bird. The day, sitting on the golden dais of heaven with folded hands, was perfect.

At last it came; the flying-boat heralded by its locust droning, skimmed the river like an osprey seeking fish, and dragged its talons in the water to a halt. Any heart not absolutely torpid with age would have beat faster at the sight of this craft destined to draw planets closer.

"Captain Kenny was detained," said the pilot

leaning out. "I want you to meet Mr. Allen Wilson."

"And conversely," said Mr. Wilson, "meet Mr. T. A. Lawrence."

The greatest moments do not convey all their rarity at the time; and I found myself saying au revoir to Matamek in ordinary tones, donning the garb they gave me and climbing into the machine with a heart still unshattered by the occasion. My abode was a hole in the prow with a removable bottom-piece through which photographers could gaze upon the globe below and, like Medusa, turn it into an enduring thing. Only they did it with gelatin instead of snakes.

"Are you ready?" asked Lawrence. When I nodded he touched something or other and we withdrew from earth, as easily and as eerily as it happens in dreams. To have what one wants without even the expense of volition is the ne plus ultra of Aladdin certainly.

I looked over my nest's edge like a young robin, or rather like a blessed he damosel. Matamek dissolved. The fields of the Trappists and the roof of their self-made Gehenna dropped behind. The only tentacle of humanity which remained was a solitary road along the river. Until we had passed this I should not be entirely happy, for the lands of my fancy have always been untilled.

The even roar of our propeller made conversation as impossible as at an afternoon tea, and one could think and observe and feel the strong pulse of new emotions crowding without having to dissipate them immediately in trying to outchatter other simians. Here one could be a god and taste his godship undiluted with anything but the sharp tang of ozone. Men have indeed wished not unworthily for wings.

We had been following the snakings of the Mistassini, and now that human road down below, which so long had dogged our shadow, began to flag and weary of the chase. It led to a cabin, and beyond that into a wood-lot and was lost. Here civilization ceased. No more ripe meadows, no more cattle standing in the yard, no housewives drawing water. All that was south of us, gone. Ahead lay only the un-roaded currents of the air and spaces on the map largely empty of name, except for a few blue clusterings of lakes and the black lines of rivers. The colored moments unrolled for me immeasurable woods, wallowing rivers, and distances dazzling with lakes. The ponderous earth became a unity. As the pettiness of detail faded the truth of it all focused into vividness. For once I was seeing the earth and the world.

At first the forest map immediately beneath was a disappointment. Great areas of burnt

lands showed bare as the Valley of Dry Bones, the white rocks pale in the rising sun, with here and again a tongue of green fir-forest running down some sheltered valley which the flames had overleapt. The great river, shrunk from the spring floods, ran between ribbons and crescents of sand, often dividing into many channels. Aspen groves thinly greened the banks, and straggling bands of birch took stand against the shifting stream. Often the islands that reared like green hedgehogs wading in the current were the most interesting of all. Occasionally we would pass a muskeg, whereon I hoped for moose.

Just before we turned up the Rat River we crossed a fleet of Indians going to the post. I wondered what they thought when, wheeling, our first flash of silver struck their eyes; wondered, too, what the leader of a flock of ducks which we over-flew considered us, wondered most of all what lay behind the ranges. Far toward the northeast the mountains rose in suggestive chains that seemed to point a finger further north, and I would have liked to follow it forever. On the northwest other mountains hung low along the horizon. Straight ahead shone low lands, unkempt woods, and a wild desolation of lakes. We pointed along the very path Polaris would be lighting, were winging steadily on the highway of the northern lights. As far as I could see ahead

into the misty radiance of morning, our way was clear to the faint-sounding shores of Grand Lac Mistassini, and the muskeg-covered slopes of the mother of streams.

Below us the Rat River suddenly pushed back its banks a mile and became Lac aux Rats, a silver-way of several miles in length. With a clutch of regret I realized that our destination lay beneath. Down we plunged, glided, ran like arriving Mercury over the waters, and so, as softly as sunset becomes evening, came to the level of the lake, and the green shelter of the forest world. My dreams had been no better than the thing.

"What do you say to a little breakfast?" asked Wilson. We had indeed come down to earth.

I believe that I am composed of romance and realism in equal quantities. In the old song, "What Are Little Boys Made Of?" I have always considered that the boys had scarcely a fair deal. Yet it might have fortified the author of that lyric in his views to have observed us three men, just arrived in a spot more beautiful than the Forest Spell in "Siegfried," turn our backs on the breathless mirror of the lake, on the centuried spruces and the gleaming strand, and direct our immortal souls toward hacking bacon into strips.

Instead of reciting something like "How quiet

sleeps the moon on yonder bank," Lawrence said, "Where in the devil did I lay that can-opener?"

And instead of "Think, in this batter'd caravanserai. . . ." Allen replied, "Damned if I know."

It was a radiant meal. And I was glad to have the world with me again. After those lonely days in Roberval, those alien hours with Matamek, that fearful glimpse into the strained eyes of those mistaken monks, it was restful to live normally again, and a delight to have fallen into these fellows' hands. We gulped down biographies with our coffee, and rose acquainted.

Our work, which was merely to unload a few tins of gasolene from the boat and cache it beneath a tarpaulin for a future flight still farther north, was soon done, and I went to inspect a shack near-by. Perhaps I am too easily thrilled. But there was something about that cabin, deserted by its trapper owner, waiting in that sunny cove, that was as picturesque to me as some thatched inn, of cool walls and swinging sign, in Leicestershire, where Queen Elizabeth may have stopped to dry her gaiters, when Shakspere was a youth. For the use of this cabin was centuries old, if not the logs themselves, and the forest about it, of black spruce and canoe birch, sprang from a soil lazy in its primeval habits.

The door yielded to the touch, for the old Indian, now at the post, no more anticipated visitors than did Abraham that night the angels stopped; and had he expected them, he would have locked nothing away. For it is the amazing circumstance in this country that one's open treasures are not pilfered, and that one can leave a canoe or a fishing-rod or a bale of food anywhere one pleases and find it untouched.

The interior was fairly wanton with things I would have liked for mementos: skins still on stretchers, a gun or two, drawings on fungi, two or three sets of antlers, one caribou, two moose, and all the implements of the man's life-work. Outside there were some bear skulls stacked on a post. Before going on a hunt, I am told, these trappers still implore aid from their totem, and when about to kill large game, say, "Forgive me, O Bear." There are manners in the wilderness. Imagine a pig-sticker in Armour's saying "Forgive me, O Shoat; pardon me, O Swine!" True or not, there were the skulls impaled. And what curious juxtaposition of ancient and modern practice! The apology to the *ursus moriturus,* then the crack of modern gun; ghost and gunpowder. Even in this high latitude civilization had begun to dig the grave for poetry.

It was mid-morning now in this morning world, and I fancied a polite anxiety to be off kindling

in my pilots' breasts. I would gladly have stayed there until the moose came down and ate from my hand, as the black flies were already doing. Indeed we were equipped for it, since the flying-boat carried emergency rations for a fortnight, a set of tools, anchor and line, shotgun and ammunition, signal pistol and colored light, fish-net, life-belts and preservers, blankets, pots and pans—though no piano. It all tempted me to pray for a forced landing on some obscure river-beach, handy to trout and game, where we could do a light housekeeping, with writing up the diary by day, and experimenting with the colored lights at night. But I left the prayer unuttered; I despise ingratitude.

And so we flew away.

The next weeks I lived in an oasis. Oases usually occur in deserts; this occurred in Roberval. It took the form of fraternity house officered by Captain Kenny and peopled by the rest of the air station, of whom I was chiefly intimate with Wilson and Lawrence and the Rutherfords.

The air station consisted of a little harbor made by a breakwater and Cimon Simon's dock, the Ouiatchouanische River which spouted or sulked into the harbor according to the rains, an office building-airdrome, a photographer's den, a scow, a bear, and a paling fence. I had often looked longingly over the paling fence; now I was to

live inside it; live, moreover, with witty young fellows in that happiest sort of friend-making which is disguised in jester-gibe and scholar-motley. I had forgotten persiflage existed.

"The air board at Ottawa and the Provincial Government here are both backing this work," said Captain Kenny, a man in the warm-hearted early summer of his years. "We combine patrolling for signs of forest-fire, with photographic work in connection with timber-limits and geographic exploration. Most of the country to the north, northeast, and northwest of us is virtually unknown. We hope to penetrate as far as Grand Lac Mistassini this season. That 's three hundred miles from here. I 'd like you to see that country to the northwest. It 's more interesting than due north, or at least the country this side of the Rat. How long can you stay?"

I intimated a period co-existent with my natural life.

"Then I 'll take you up to Stacker Lake, up the Ashuapmouchouan. We 're making a cache there. An interesting family of Indians live on Stacker. It 's a pity you were n't here last week; I think we 're in for bad weather."

After lunch they took me out in the speed-boat, while telling me a little of their work. I was as happy as a kid, who has not only run away from school, but is promised a fishing-ex-

cursion and, later, immunity from punishment at home by a namesake uncle. I had supper with them.

That evening initiated me into the delectable routine of loafing which I was to follow for days and days: supper with Kenny and Lawrence and Wilson, and two cigarettes' worth of talk around the table. Then while they did a few more chores in that mysterious office of theirs I sat out on the rocks of the Ouiatchouanische and toyed with the bear or drowned reality in sunsets. Shapes of flowing worlds, colors of the divine dream, marvels of cloud-music in silent andantes or maestoso winds marked that hour; and Lake St. John is memory's frame for immoderate visions. Then back to earth and over to their cottage, for an hour of anecdote or the Victor and pipe-smoke and happy idleness. Then to Madame Huot's. Madame Huot's was our habit, and habit makes curious things enjoyable. Instead of renewing our youth like the eagle's by taking deep breaths outdoors, we had Madame Huot renew our glasses. Chocolate sundaes will be forevermore indissoluably associated with this picture in my mind: a little table under glaring lights, opposite me lazy Kenny telling man's tales, on one side Wilson, lazier, recalling anecdotes of London, on the other Lawrence—no not laziest,

Photograph by Walter Rutherford.

LAC AUX RATS—AND NORTH.

I was that, in addition to being happily immune to thought. And so to bed.

The weather, hitherto a marvel of monotony, now began to injure itself in an effort to prevent more flights. The next morning a mist had set in from the north. The day after the mist had changed to a northeast rain. The program changed, daily, through all the varieties known to weather—blasts, tempests, hurricanes, typhoons, and (I think) once a sirocco. Daily, too, the Air Board's comment intensified; and it was just before we had all reached a state of chronic impiety that the wind changed and did me the eternal favor of blowing me into the Rutherfords.

I remember how it happened. The wind, having exhausted all the easterly directions, had dropped for a moment before settling into a good long blow from the west. The clouds had parted, and the sun, deceptive as the golden calf, had begun to shine. I was hastening smartly down to the air station to make my usual inquiries of Kenny and had got to the door of the photographic department when a sudden personal cloud enveloped me, like Æneas's, but for less accommodating reasons! "I never saw it rain harder," is the usual description. But it didn't rain; it squirted. And to avoid being purged from the earth I dove into Rutherford's den.

Looking back on it, I call that a fortuitous shower, for thanks to it I met an artist and made a friend, two of them, for Mrs. Rutherford came in upon a discussion we were having, three hours later, as to whether Conrad should be illustrated, and haled us home to lunch, the first of many like-animated meals. Rutherford had not only the art of laying hold on the face of things with a camera and making it expressive; he also had a sense of humor—an essential to long life in Roberval. With a feeling for beauty, a profession that satisfies it, and a sense of humor with which to tease the Fates, a man ought to be happy, I should say, particularly with a Mrs. Rutherford. They were amused at some of Matamek's arguments against the Trappist life.

"You should see Matamek's cousin, the gorgeous Naita," said Walter. "She used to sell flowers here. She dresses better than anybody in town, in excellent taste really, and her manner is positively regal. When she passes she just deigns to notice one in a Queen Mary manner. Unfortunately she occasionally makes an error of judgment when she is drunk. Drank once a cupful of iodine, being under the impression that it was a milder stimulant."

For three more days the wind blew beneath heavens as bright and blue and golden as the summery fields. I would have perished of ex-

asperation and taken the train had it not been for the Rutherford luncheon parties, the Kenny & Co. evenings. I tried to solace myself with such philosophy as

> He who does not fly to-day
> May live to later, anyway.

But the best of storms must part. One evening the wind stole away, the twilight clothed herself in blue and silver and set a star in her hair, the lake became once more hospitable to flying-boats, and a moon called to the Endymion of those silent-spaced forests. I longed to fly away into that ethereal light; I was afraid such beauty could not last. But Kenny explained how hard it was to land on moonlit waters, especially if one did n't know them, and we compromised on an early start the next day—Kenny, Rutherford, and the neophyte.

The next day—well, you know how it is when one starts to pin immensities to paper; all the immenseness goes and you have dead weight and a paragraph of dying words on your hands. It is like trying to set the Alps to music. The best that science can do is to poise a stuffed hummingbird over a museum morning-glory and say Exhibit X-319.2, Hummingbirdum Sawdusticum. All the God of it has escaped. And it is the same with flight. You cannot convey it between book-

covers, not even with all the winged words of Homer himself. I shall rest with saying that next day, ten minutes after coffee, and twenty after dawn, we left the planet.

The sun writes the epics of the years. The moon has her romances and her fantasies, and the stars tell fairy-tales of the unhabitable vast, but it is the sun that combines both the glory and the go of greatness. A man must be a constitutional mollycoddle indeed, whose every fiber does not tingle, whose being does not glow, with the color, the newness, the daring of that moment when one casts off from earth, to soar in the medium of the infinite. That morning things conspired to give me profound happiness. There in my aërial prow-pit I could survey the world—a world bathed in such a sea of calm and color as no magic-handed painter could portray. I was being flown by two men whom it was good to be with. And we were off exploring. I felt a bit of that lucid madness which drove Columbus west. Under Kenny's hand we mounted steadily, turned west, and felt the drift of air from inland places sting our brows as we took the general trend of the valley Ashuapmouchouan.

This river with the Indian name (meaning "where the moose were seen" or "where the moose feed," or "where the moose come down to drink," depending on the particular Indian you

ask), is, like the Mistassini and the Peribonka, very long, very wide, and very shallow. From my aery I could see its estuary lying, like a miniature Mississippi's, in the lake, its colors ranging through all the golds and ambers. It was very luxury itself to press through the air and watch the riffles below which spell such weary effort for those poling up the stream. The islands at the mouth faded astern, St. Felicien faded; the pastures, insectiverous with cows, became more rare and passed from sight; lakes beckoned to right and left of the mighty river, the forest closed in upon it. We were left with the universe.

Our objective was Stacker Lake, a hundred miles up the Ashuapmouchouan, that is, about an hour and a half's worth of ecstasy away. To drop into it from the breathless rush of air was like resting in some ivied cloister open to the sun. Spruce-battalioned hills protected it from the winds, a broad beach gave it a silver frame, and, for touch of soul-color in the picture, an Indian woman in a scarlet hood was fishing from a canoe far along. Thus did we tap the vintage of the savage North, and taste the bubbly moment in its perfection. We were drunk to silence on its beauty for a moment, and in that moment saw beyond the fugitive scene into the changeless and eternal.

The next moment all was stir. Other women

emerged from tents at the lake-head, innumerable children appeared from behind the trees, dogs barked; and, seeing that we were not going to annihilate the earth with spear-flashings of fire, another canoe, containing the two men of the lake, was launched.

Allow me to record another thought. Having read of the first acceptance of Columbus as a divine being, of the obeisance and worship accorded old de Soto, I wondered if these savages might not receive us on like misconception, and believe us to be, say, the Trinity descended for an informal call. Could the setting have been more speciously arranged? Savages, a day clear at last as if by a miracle, and three angels dropping down from the rather inaccessible above. Could anything appear more naturally supernatural? Could we, I ask, expect anything less than a complimentary burnt offering?

Alas for such vainglorious anticipations! Instead of besetting us with requests for salvation the elder Indian asked us for the news, and what is more, in French that put mine to the blush. Like most of the other Indians in Hither Gaul, he and his families had visited the post, and had seen the plane there. He said that the children were not scared, only shy. We were invited ashore.

They had planted their community on a point

of land at the head of the lake, cutting down all trees except three dignified spruces, and unlike the more nomadic Montagnais of the north, utilizing a log-house as well as two tents. The floor of the house was made of flattened logs, there being no boards within a hundred miles.

They, like us, had had breakfast; and we, unlike them, were unready for the next meal. However there seemed to be no gentle method of quenching their hospitality in the spark. Soon the fire burned, and the food on it, and shortly I was gnawing at jerked caribou for the first time in my life. All the jerking had not been done to my caribou. I had not supposed that caribou came within striking distance of Stacker; but when I made the observation to Rutherford he said: "Caribou? That 's nothing for this forest. I would n't be surprised at a pachyderm." It 's great fun being with Rutherford; you 're helped into the atmosphere of things. As later: "Walter," I said, "if you were a census-taker, how would you list all those children?"

"Mostly as accidental."

"But, even at that, it 's odd."

"Not to a census-taker. Two men, four women, no union hours; cipher it up."

"You mean polygamy?"

"Yes, but openly arrived at, as your Woodrow Wilson would say, and since the bush looks

far from overcrowded as we flew in, far be it from me to indulge in carping criticism."

These Indians had lived on Stacker, we were told, for thirty years; and not realizing the necessity of movies, victrolas, snappy stories, ice-cream, and automobiles, seemed happy. They helped Kenny cache his gasolene, and as the boat would come again Kenny asked if he could bring them anything. To our surprise the only thing they wanted was a cat, to frighten off the chipmunks and red squirrels which infested the camp.

"We 'll have a round-up in Roberval," said Rutherford, "and rain cats on them."

In gratitude they pressed upon us about a half-gallon of boiled blueberry pulp, their winter confiture, and rather insipid stuff for lack of sugar.

It would have been great fun to have spent the day there and become ethnologists. Every half-hour disclosed something entirely new to my racial way of life. But every minute our going became more imperative, if we were to go at all, for puffy clouds with portentous bellies rose over the hills, and did not drift away. Our brilliant dawn had developed an unpracticable temper, as is the way of brilliance, and I climbed into the boat with a heart heavy enough to prevent our ever taking off. For this flight would be my last; I had no further excuse for tarrying in Roberval; whereupon I found I loved it.

As we rose above the trees my melancholy was startled into wonder by no less a sight than a multitude of rainbows. Now I have no intention of flinging myself, from that height, into a bitter scientific dispute. I don't know how many rainbows there were *at once*. There seemed to be multitudes. From one and now another of the horizon-riding clouds drifted pale draperies of rain, and on the draperies hung broken arcs of color. We flew into some fleeting gray, almost invisible mists, stinging to the face, and looking below I saw that the swift sun had set the flying drops to dancing down the spectrum. The landscape was drenched with blues and grays and fleckings of careering sun. Ahead a cloud-giant would tower like a castle one moment, to dissolve and don his invisible cloak the next. In a world that was a whirlwind of motion and color and a-roar in our ears, our flying-boat seemed the one stable thing. Kenny held her inexorably on. We had had the andante and the scherzo; were now in the midst of the great allegro finale of the symphony. To have left earth in that moment of elation and headed straight for Sirius would have caused no pang.

I wonder what is the alchemy of change, what the shifting principle of light that transforms a place, no matter how tedious, into a nest of affection the moment you propose to leave it. Rob-

erval, on my hands, had seemed a place unusurped by a single felicity. Roberval, on the point of ceasing to detain me, reminded me of its unique and now to be fornevermore-regarded scenes. I was to leave Roberval, and it hurt. Never again would I utter words on her discontinuous, ankle-spraining boardwalk, never again would I wander on her lonely can-strewn beach. And the hang of it was, I was genuinely sorry.

CHAPTER XVI

STATOMISKATIN-OU

THE next morning was one of progressive farewells, though not all of them were final. Rutherford, I predict, will be famous in his art some day and I shall do obeisance in his studio. And I predict that in the rainy season Kenny & Co. will meet around other marble tables, and order other things than sarsaparilla, or prophecy hath lost her function. So after Mrs. Rutherford's last chicken dinner, and the last au revoir to Monsieur Naud, and Madame Huot and the airmen, I could still step dry-eyed into Kenny's speed-boat, in which he was to take me to Point Bleue. There other farewells awaited.

And these were doubtless final. Mr. Hamilton and Monsieur Tessier and Monsieur Kurtness had all been good to me, and none of them letter-writing men. And there was Matamek, well-spring of the past, destined for what future channels! It is hard to go through the trials of fatigue and flies, through the intimacies of woods-travel and camp-fires with any fellow and not

acquire some affection for him. He may be stubborn in his practices, and without much tact in preferring his own views; but if he be not an absolute ninny or a thorough hog, the very equality of the disasters undergone by him and you will make a basis of mutuality of respect and liking.

So with Matamek, although of another race, alien thoughts, and a strange livelihood. I liked him for his sense of humor, his quick eye for circumstance or beauty, and a ready response to the esteem in which I held him. I was on the eve of friendship with him, at the point where we could set aside the outer politenesses and indulge in that conflict of argument, the exchange of knowledge, the pleasures of explanation which the tyranny of strangeness between two denies. In another month he would be away north again, and all the special-delivery stamps in the post-office would never find him, or profit if they could.

But the red Fates had one more kindness in their quiver for Matamek to tender me. The boy saw us landing and came with the news: "Mr. Speck is here. I have told him of you." And almost as eagerly as if we were trailing a moose, he led me along the beach to the tent of an old Indian, with whom was sitting Frank G. Speck, *the* Algonquin authority. The fact of the *the*-ness of his authority I did not know then, nor even that he had made for himself a lifelong engage-

ment with those Northern tribes, the least changed, the most primitive of all red-bloods today. But the quick-motioned, low-voiced man, whose handshake was a welcome in itself, immediately won my confidence and made simplicity my platform. In a minute we were discussing our immediate interests.

"Have you seen one of those?" he asked, putting a pack-strap-like belt of tanned mooseskin in my hand. "It 's the Montagnais nimában, their hunting charm. It 's rather rare to find such a good specimen. I 've had a lucky day."

The wide part was bound on the upper edge with a red silk ribbon, on the lower with a green. There was a symbolical scene of hunter, canoe, a bear and trees, embroidered in red, yellow and light-blue silks.

"This magical object," said Mr. Speck, "is worn by the hunter who has a revelation about getting game. When he gets his game true to the revelation, he wraps it in this strap and brings it home. The nimában is also a means of communicating with the shades of the animal, and a lot more which has n't been ascertained yet. Napani here has one which he used in a hunt that successfully averted a famine. When the animals were killed he put his nimában on his head, dancing around, singing, rejoicing for his

luck, and as a recompense to the spirit of the game. He was just telling me the story."

"Ask my uncle to tell the story of Gluskap and the wind-bird," said Matamek.

"Do ask him," I begged, and then remembered that there was no time.

Of all things to do in an Indian tent, when about to be told an old racial legend, by a veteran hunter, I now did the most preposterous thing of all—looked at my watch. The train was due in twenty minutes. Kind Monsieur Naud had made all arrangements for my next adventure on the Ile d'Alma. Guides were hired. And now the train was almost due. A kinder fate would have withheld Mr. Speck entirely from my acquaintance, or else derailed the train. This suspense between temptation and the time-table was hard.

"I will interpret, if you like," volunteered Mr. Speck; "it is an interesting tale, common with variations among all the Algonquin tribes. I have heard Newell Lion tell it at Oldtown, Maine. In fact he has told me the whole trickster cycle from the Penobscot, among whom this legend doubtless originated."

"You will not miss the train," said Matamek; "I will watch."

So, with one ear open to the past, and one pricked toward the future, I sat in the soft air from Lake St. John by Napani's tent door and

heard this tale of Gluskap, the shaman; the ripple and flow of the Indian tongue being untangled into English by Mr. Speck:

"Then Gluskap overturned a rocky point, and made of it a canoe for himself. Then he went duck-hunting in his hollow stone canoe. He could not kill any birds, as the wind blew so hard that he could hardly paddle about. At last he suddenly grew angry, thinking, 'What causes such continuous winds?'

"Then Gluskap said, 'Grandma, I am going to search for the place where the wind comes from.'

" 'It is very far,' said his grandmother.

" 'No matter how far away it is,' said he, 'I am going to find out who causes it. Soon I shall return.'

"He went away, going against the wind, it growing stronger as he went. On the seventh day he could hardly walk, it was so strong. It blew off all his hair. Then he saw a great magic bird slowly waving its wings, making the wind. Then, when he reached the place with difficulty, he said, 'Grandfather, could n't you possibly make stronger wind?'

" 'Grandchild, that 's the best I can do,' said the big bird.

"Then Gluskap said, 'If you could possibly sit higher up, far over there on the hill on the peak, you would make it stronger.'

"'No, grandson, I could not,' said he. 'I have sat here since the beginning of things.'

"'I will help you, Grandfather,' said Gluskap.

"'Very well,' said the bird; 'if you will help me, I will go, because I want all who face me to have the benefit of my wind.'

"Then Gluskap took the big bird on his back, carried him to a high ledge and there dropped him accidentally, so that he suddenly broke his wing. Then Gluskap left and went home.

"'Now,' said he, 'I shall have good duck-hunting. We shall always have a calm.' Then he went out paddling. Surely it was calm. The water grew so thick with scum that he could hardly paddle. Said he, 'I think I will go there again where the wind is. It is always too calm.' Then he went where the great bird was. The bird did not know him now when he arrived, because Gluskap's hair had already grown out again.

"'What has always caused so much calm, Grandfather?' asked Gluskap of the big bird.

"'Simply that an old bald-headed man came here and wanted stronger wind; and I told him that I could not manage it, that it was all that I could do; and he told me that he would carry me on to a higher place. Then, sure enough, he carried me; and he dropped me and broke my wing. Now I have only one wing.'

"Then said Gluskap, 'Grandfather, I will carry you back again where you sat, and will also heal you.'

" 'O grandchild,' said the bird, 'I should rejoice so much if you would. I am already tired of lying here.'

"Then Gluskap carried him, and put him back where he wanted to sit, and healed his wing. 'Now, Grandfather, try your wing.'

"And the bird tried his wing, and it was healed. Gluskap was blown over. The bird was very glad. 'How much you have pleased me, grandchild!'

" 'Now, Grandfather,' said Gluskap, 'hereafter, do not use your wings too steadily, because our descendants cannot hunt for their living when there are such continuous winds. When you move your wings, our descendants cannot paddle or hunt ducks on the water. Now, if possible, wave your wings a day or for two days, then rest a day, so that our descendants can hunt ducks on the ocean.'

" 'You speak the truth. I guess, grandson. . . .' "

"The train is arriving around the corner," interposed Matamek.

"I am just done," said Napani:

" 'I guess, grandson, there was too much wind.

From now on there shall not be such strenuous wind.' Then Gluskap went home; and when he arrived, his grandmother rejoiced."

The old hunter stopped; and, likewise, the train. I made my hurried thanks. "Statomiskatin-ou" replied the old man with a good deal of dignity.

"Good health to you, he says, and I add, good luck," cried Mr. Speck after me.

"Watch out as you go by Mistassini, old Matamek, and don't let the Trappists get you," I cried.

"I will watch. Good health, friend."

The train gave one of its congenital jerks and started. A curve devoured the white buildings of the post, hid the seventeenth century, and began to obscure the tents of the primeval people on the beach. But there still stood, where we had shaken hands, the figure of the Indian boy, stolid, gazing, dwindling into nothing.

Photograph by Walter Rutherford.

THE WANDERING MISTASSIBI.

CHAPTER XVII

ST. JOSEPH D'ALMA THE HOSPITABLE

IN one sublime-ridiculous step I had descended from the battlements of beauty and camaraderie into a moat of tobacco-spittle, the car being in substantially its usual condition. My friends were receding into the past, while I must needs go on; for time and the Laurentides were waiting. The train advanced, furlong by furlong. At least I suppose it advanced; I had no heart to notice, and one has to watch Government-run trains carefully to tell. I had no heart to think about the beauties I was passing; the really lovely buttercups and irises in the fields were all primroses to me and nothing more. And the falls of the Metabouchouan were n't even that, though doubtless very fine before being sawmilled.

So, running true to my usual form, my spirits had sunk from the boiling-point of enthusiasm there on the beach at Pointe Bleue to within a degree or so of zero as we reached Hébertville. We read in history that the beginnings of this place *furent lents et penibles,* were slow and

painful—like the train's. I lugged my duffle-bag off, and stared around hoping to see La Grande Décharge, the rapids of which I was expecting to shoot. Instead on every side I saw clover meadows and fields of grain, flat to the horizon like the steppes of Siberia. It was then that I reached zero.

A nice-looking boy touched his hat. "Is this Monsieur Maurice, sir?" I admitted it. "David Néron sent me for you, sir." David Néron was one of the guides whom Naud the Good had engaged for the rapid-shooting. "Have you baggage, sir?"

The lad's name was John Tremblay, which I quickly changed to Jehu Tremblay; for no sooner had I been enticed into his Ford than he sprang in beside, and, like an antelope who thinks she hears a griffin at her heels, we were off. Mistake not the simile. An antelope, once under way, does not bound along, but rather seems to fly parallel to the surface of the ground, like an even-tempered bolt of lightning. So we. The Ford whirred across the equable meadow-road in a manner its inventor may have dreamed of, but possibly never realized in practice. Meanwhile Jehu gossiped. If the good die young, one might suppose that good chauffeurs would die very young. More than once I guessed that our time

had come. But that was because I was foolish enough to imagine myself at the wheel. John Tremblay leaped (I think) the chickens and children in the road as we entered St. Joseph d' Alma and pulled me up before La Maison Tremblay, his uncle's inn, with the same flourish with which I can picture Wilhelm II arriving *at* the field of the Marne in a twin six.

David Néron and Henri LeBel, engaged as bow paddle for the perilous descent, were waiting. In French, which they tempered to my auditory abilities, they put themselves at my service, explained the preparations we had better make, designated the proper flies for ouananiche (those magic fish which haunt La Grande Décharge), and asked if I objected to their attending early mass on the morrow. Since it is quite possible to get drowned in the rapids, I thought I ought not to interpose between them and hopes of a happy eternity. They left to buy the provisions.

And now Fate plucked my sleeve, and I turned to see a young man, tall, well-built, dark-haired, with eyes that spoke only of good nature, standing by a big McLaughlin-Buick.

"I hear you are going to shoot the rapids," he said.

I nodded.

"Then do you want a guide?"

"I have two, *malheureusement.*"

"That is all right, then, though for another time my father is good."

We had quite a talk there on the steps of the inn, surrounded by a large and increasing group of St. Joseph d'Almians, wide-eyed at the sight of a stranger; and my spirits rose momentarily. Again I found myself encharmed in habitant-land. Not a soul in the village spoke a word of English; not a soul seemed troubled by avarice, or the passage of time. And every one was bound to entertain me, that curious-minded man who liked to go somewhere instead of living (*se reposer*) peacefully in one spot. Every one was bound and bent on it that I should be treated like a king. The first thing that every self-respecting king needs is, of course, an audience; so three-deep they listened to the diary of my adventures without a titter, though the mangled idioms of their tongue lay about in heaps. Little knowing and little-known they lived there by their impetuous river, La Petite Décharge du Lac St. Jean, and cultivated virtue and their fields. As London never could, they took me in; and the prince of the place seemed to be the young fellow who had taken my entertainment upon himself. His name was François Tremblay.

"Perhaps," said François," you would like to

see one of the rapids down which you go to-morrow."

François was brother to Jehu Tremblay, but, I am thankful to say, his ambitions lay otherwheres than in mile-a-minute travel. From the moment I stepped into his car there began a twenty-four hour period, so far above most days in novelty, in satisfaction, in beauty, in happiness even, that I not only shall never forget it, but always, in the remembrance of it, shall have a thrill of joy. The white eternal moments of life are those born in the fire of spirit-suffering, when the soul is torn from one by life-rending music, when personality writhes in growing pains, or when love wakes one from a too comfortable dream. These are the moments that raise life to views possible only from Calvary, moments of agony, yet so beautiful one would not have them taken. And I cannot pretend that the Ile d'Alma offered such. But to see a fine soul lying quietly in someone's eyes, and to see beauty blossom and glow and pass with an understanding friend at hand; these are to stamp a day remarkable.

I wish I could have painted François on that evening ride. He was in his mid-twenties, yet one who had not tried the world. Only those who are innocent at heart can have a laugh like his. He had not yet acquired that sou-counting slant

of mind that stamps the French-Canadian of towns with the mark of sordid coffers. He had sinned naturally, I must suppose, and according to his growth, to have kept that sparkling freshness. For there are sins that fit each age so perfectly as to be but worth the name of experience; to indulge in them is to suffer no worse harm than from a ducking in summer. To carry them over to the next season; ah, there your soul gets its chills and fever!

He had a charitable mind, a warm heart, and a spirit that felt the soft hand of beauty laid upon it; and when we came to the brink of our destination, the high banks of La Grande Décharge, and a sudden glory burned upon our sight, it silenced him, as it should have silenced any man with feelings mature enough to be daunted by beauty.

If I find it impossible to make François visible how useless the effort to portray that scene! Yet how inevitable the effort! For beauty burns to be communicated as surely as an inland dweller burns to write home about his first glimpse of the sea. The boy and I stood on a grassy ledge looking up a narrow avenue of light into a sunset sky, framed in the fir-gloom of retreating hills. Down this bright avenue poured a river, impetuous, tormented, leaping. Like a mad racing herd of colts it flung itself down the river-bed; and the shaking of manes, the thunder of hoofs, the spray

of dust, the wild rush ever on and on, whelmed eye and ear.

Opposite reared a wall of forest, darkening momentarily; behind us the sunlight rose from the earth, passed up the motionless firs, gilded their still spires, and departed on that way where footfall is never heard. The west was one deep well of light, clear and soft, and already the far rapids, heads-down in the dusk, leaped and played with mane-flashings as if they were being ridden barebacked by the sons of Pan.

And when my sight had wandered from the thrush-haunted woods ascending the heights, and had looked down into the swirl of waters, it turned again to that canary-yellow west, where the Creator was locking up the homestead of the hours. There, suddenly, a dramatic thing occurred. God drew the bolt on day's door, in the shape of a tongue of cloud that had crossed the ravine, and, crossing had turned to flame.

And while I was stilled to rapture by the sight, I felt a pressure on my arm—François pointing in wonder to the east, where I saw, through the uncurtained window of the night, the full moon hanging yellow-pale.

On such moments, as on stepping-stones, one quickly crosses the strangeness that separates two; and as François drove me home he told me of the fancies that lay near his heart. "Encore

un garçon,'' he had said earlier, but now he told of the girl he was going to marry. These young fellows, for all that there is nothing much to do in the way of social excitement, whose temperament does not lead them to the sports, and whose Celtic blood is hospitable to the affections, these handsome, healthy habitants much to my surprise, marry comparatively late. Many and many a time I came across very eligible men of thirty still sitting on the paternal porch. Twenty-five is about the age when the potential groom begins to look about him seriously. If he does not, the priest does for him. ''Telesphore,'' the holy man will say, ''Telesphore, is it not time that thou art setting up a home for thyself? Hast thou seen Marie Hébert lately?'' And the youth responds, ''No, Father, but I shall take pains to see her.'' And it very often happens that the Marie Hébert in question is the right one for Telesphore. The priest is a good pastor, and tends his lambs with all the assiduity recommended by the New Testament.

''What 's the matter with the girls?'' I said.

François shrugged his shoulders and sang me about two dozen verses, of which I took down a few. The girl says:

Je voudrais bien me marier,
Je voudrais bien me marier,
Mais j' ai grand' peur de me tromper,

Mais j' ai grand' peur de me tromper:
Ils sont si malhonnêtes,
Ma luron ma lunette;
Ils sont si malhonnêtes
Ma luron, ma luré.

Je ne veux pas d' un habitant.
Il faut toujours aller au champ
Et rouler la charette.
Ma luron, ma lunette. . . .

Je ne veux pas d' un laboreux.
Il faut toujours toucher les boeufs
Et manier la curette. . . .

Je ne veux pas d' un colporteur.
Rarement ils se font honneur
En portant la cassette. . . .

Je ne veux pas d' un avocat,
Car ils aiment trop des ducats.
Ils trompent les fillettes. . . .

"Vous voyez," said François with his contagious laugh.

"But just the same one girl has wished François Tremblay."

"But I have a car," he flashed back.

Was it possible that the habitant *fille* had taken the rest of the world's standard of eligibility?

"Would you like to hear my father play the violin?" asked François.

His father's house was perched above the river, La Petite Décharge, and as we entered in

the twilight I heard the violin, never expecting the sight that greeted me—the stalwart man reclining on a lounge, a little child by him, resting its entranced head on his shoulder, while he played his fiddle, propped on his breast. And of course he was smoking his black pipe all the while.

Now François danced to his father's jig, an inimitable tune, lively enough to make the chairs and table follow. One by one the daughters, carrying children, came in, their neighbors following. They brought out some home-made wine and cakes, and it was an evening of communal cheer. I had been known to these people about four hours.

I smiled, as I rode home in the moonlight with François, with the satisfaction of one who has found entrance to a people at last. I recalled those fruitless hours with Government officials. François had done more for his people in my mind than all the frock-coats in Quebec. In the fields, in the bush, in their village life the ancient blood of Brittany still flows warm and gay and generous. As I lay in my bed, in the little eaves room above the river, the romance of the *coureurs desbois,* the *voyageurs,* the *chantiers* welled up from the dark. The noise of the distant river, the groves of fir still somber in the moonlight, the gaiety and charm of the evening blended with

the pictures from history's page in my sleepy mind. English-speaking souls seemed far away. Near at hand, legend peered around every corner. I knew the French-Canadian character now and was satisfied. Here was still New France, embodied in the solidity and smiling courtesies of François and his people. I dropped asleep to the refrain of one of their love-songs which they had sung on the porch there in the moonlight:

> I' y a longtemps que je t' aime;
> Jamais je ne t' oublierai!

CHAPTER XVIII

LA GRANDE DÉCHARGE

WHILE the morning was still fresh with night I went to church with my husky guides, Néron and LeBel. As I sat in the back pew, seeing, through the gloom, the sleepy candles and the wax-faced virgins vegetating in the mumbling quiet of the friendly ceremony, I felt much like one of those ancient crusaders starting to the wars. Was not the day confronted with adventure and were we not to run the gauntlet of sudden death? To be sure death made a picture of but frail physique against the broad-shouldered sturdiness of those two French-Canadians. Yet the white horses of the Gervais rapids had trampled the life out of men. I thought how death is man's boldest fancy, the dragon which God lets us conjure up for life's twilight-time, so that, like children, we may run in well-imagined terror through the haunted dark. Yet, it was death, the companion-maker, that made me the respecter of my guides. Who knows what sobrieties might have escaped me had we but been going a-wild-strawberrying!

Alas, while matters of the other world should have engaged me, I was still intent on those of this, and my facile ear was filled, not with the Latin of the purling priest, but with the subdued roar of those rapids which François had shown me. "The water here is sixty feet deep," he had said, "and I 've seen it suck down a log forty feet long, not to appear again." "What chance then has an eighteen-foot canoe," thought I, but held my tongue. "Down there is *la Chute au Diable,* the Devil's Falls." I looked at the ghostly death-dance of the waters and the reason for the name seemed awfully plain. And as these memories made inroads on my imagination, I began to think that coming to church was one more thoughtfulness of Providence. Heaven knows what other speculations I might have come upon had not the priest abridged his sermon and dismissed us into the sanative sunshine. Providence had at least picked the most beautiful of all days for my demise.

Jehu Tremblay, Ford and food awaited us. François said good-by with promises of unrestrained letter-writings (but no word from the young dog yet, which is the sum of my experience in that land, where no precedent for promise-keeping has ever been recorded), and then over the hills to the far away. The sun gleamed from seraphic skies, the firs sent columns of incense unto

heaven, and my spirits were in a veritable hubbub of anticipation. As an additional satisfaction, I found that I was traveling with men much above the ordinary.

David Néron, sturdy as a sea-captain on his feet, fairly short, very wiry, and about fifty years old, had made shooting La Grande Décharge his special activity. What he said came from the springs of experience in well-measured words. Caution was his chief tenet, but while gliding down the Devil's esplanade caution and a good paddle are two highly comforting things. Quiet of speech, easy of manner, with just a hint of Celtic twinkle in his gray eyes, Néron looked, especially, in his galluses and felt hat, the guide par excellence. And I heartily advise any one committing themselves to this trip to write ahead to David Néron, St. Joseph d' Alma, P. Q., to organize the party.

Henri LeBel made the team-work perfect. Thirty years old, a six-footer, ox-strong, and with an inextinguishable good humor, he had still a moderate appetite, and the instinctive politenesses of the French-Canadian, with none of the vices of excellence that I could discover—I mean vanity of contumacious leadership. Henri LeBel completed the picture. Thus was I perfectly equipped with men, with weather, and with a field of adventure. Beauty, excitement, camaraderie,

and an outcome just sufficiently uncertain to add the fillip of good venture—was ever chap so lucky? We unbushed our canoe from its cache and had a pipe over it. Before me spread the widened waters of La Grande Décharge about to make their first plunge. I suppose you must have a pipeful of information, now:

La Grande Décharge—and I refuse to call it the Grand Discharge, which sounds like a strike-retaliation scheme in a locomotive-works—La Grande Décharge is the outlet to Lake St. John. Through this rocky channel the waters of a wilderness, poured by forty rivers into the large flat lake, rush with an incredible fierceness toward the sea. The drop in twenty miles is twice the height of Niagara; then, for twenty miles again, comparative quietness reigns, and finally a short series of rapids brings one to Chicoutimi, where the name Saguenay is applied to the continuing waters. For sixty miles more the river flows between world-famous cliffs to the St. Lawrence. It is safe to say that, scenically, no river of its length in the world is so crowded with superlative wonders. It is very narrow, yet drains tens of thousands of square miles of wilderness. It affords probably the wildest rapids that can be run anywhere, through scenes of variable splendor. It is the most favored home of the gamest trout there is. And after a youth of prodigal

fervor, like Shakspere's *Prince,* it settles down to the utmost magnificence, and bears one on a kingly tide to the most charming and historic spot in Canada. What a gamut! What a range of life: wilderness youth, the ecstacy of adolescence, a sobering pastoral middle age with a touch of human-kind, then a march through the mysteries of a deeper experience, a last quiet touch of beauty, and an indistinguishable merging with the long-sought end! Such the geography of it —now for the life!

At Lake St. John the out-rushing water is divided by the Ile d' Alma, a triangle with a three-mile base, and ten-mile sides. The smaller river, Le Petite Décharge, does not amount to much; by far the greater volume pouring over a fall, rushing through a rapid called Joseph Lessourds —the natives have names for all the major rapids —and into a large basin, a third of a mile across. It was by the shore of this basin that I put together my fishing-rod, Néron selected two flies, and, while they were arranging our food and duffle in the canoe, I made a preliminary cast for that fanciful fish, the ouananiche.

Now, any one who really wants to know about the ouananiche can hunt up a book about it, written by Mr. E. T. D. Chambers, the authority. The book, published by Harpers' in the nineties, is nearly as rare as the fish. It is entitled "The

Ouananiche and Its Canadian Environment," and far exceeds in interest, and I should judge veracity, any other book I ever read about fishing. Why the Government, for whom Mr. Chambers indefatigably labors in the service of its fisheries, has not seen that this work is perpetuated and sent broadcast, is but another one of those mysteries to me, which, for lack of printable adjectives, I can only call governmental. Mr. Chambers lent me his only copy, since I could not find one, and I acknowledge my indebtedness right here by saying that any statement in this chapter that sounds at all scientific has probably been either absorbed or else lifted bodily from Chambers.

To begin with, there are twenty-eight different spellings of the creature's name; "*ouananiche*" —which is pronounced whon-na-nishe—being Mr. Chamber's predilection. To go on with, he advises the angler to use a salmon fly on a No. 3 or 4 hook, with a Jock Scott, Silver Doctor, Durham Ranger, Professor, Queen of the Water, Brown Hackle, and Coachman, named in order of efficacy. And to end with, despite all this information, not a single ouan rose from the foamheads that floated slowly along the shore. I could not wonder at this, because imbedded in the foam were innumerable flies of every size and color, and it seemed to me that a ouananiche with the least hesitation on account of indigestion

would have quit eating about twenty minutes after sun-up. But I experienced a sinking of the heart. Was this to be a repetition of Lake Edward? There the rosy-minded Rowleys had commented on the ill-luck which had marked me as the singular exception among all past fishermen, and probably among all to come, when I failed to relieve their lake of its congestion of ten-pound trout. Was this the one week that ouananiche could not be got from La Grande Décharge? And wherefore? Could it be possible that fish-catching automatically stopped in the regions that I happened to pass through? Chambers, I recalled, had said something about the devastating effect of the east wind; but there was no wind. A sigh lifted from my diaphragm, rose through my bronchial tubes, and joined the larger freedom outside. Néron pushed off from shore. For the first time I realized that his name rhymed with Charon, and that this stream might be my Styx. And I had forgotten to bring my bottle of Lethe!

But such sunlight never shone on Styx, nor on many other streams where I have had the luck to voyage. The sky was innocent of cloud or haze, and rose from encircling seas of light into a pure serene, as clear as thought. We skirted the shore for a while, casting for those fly-proof fish, until the roar of Le Gros Mer, the first rapid, sounded hollowly from below, and we made ready to pen-

etrate its barrage of foam. LeBel was bow paddle. His task was to indicate the nuances of rock and swirl in the main route which Néron knew. By a jab of the paddle now, a pull now, and now a push he accomplished what Captain Néron wished, and uttered vocally in quick and, to me, unintelligible remarks. In threading doom, stern paddle has the final say, though acting often on the bow paddle's advice. Bow is eyes, stern is strength, and ultimate responsibility. And to watch Néron, on his knees now, manipulating his short paddle, three furious strokes, a hold, a back swing, an instantaneous shift to the other side, keeping himself in perfect equilibrium, in the last degree alert, feline, yet steel-like, to watch his face reflect the swift decisions of his mind, was to know that disaster was being warded off by a very nice parrying of the blade. It was to know that the swirling waters were to be taken seriously. Part of the time I faced forward, part of the time looked back. And I must say that I read more responsibility in Néron 's countenance than in the undramatic appearance of the river. Now on one side, now on the other, little waves would curl, currents dive beneath the surface, whirls put out their hands for our bow; but the sensation was scarcely what I had expected. I had rather anticipated dashing down stupendous tongues of water (as one sees them displayed on the calen-

dars of the Hudson's Bay Co.), dashing down these smooth tongues and then riding (somehow) over the curling waves at the bottom, and so on to the next plunge. I had hoped that the speed would exceed what is usually practicable in automobiles. I had supposed that the angry waves curled over one's bow, and that we dodged concisely between fanged rocks to escape them. For some reason I had looked forward to enjoying a sensation that combined the smoothness of ski-running with the exhilaration of being tossed in a blanket. And all in a perfervid silence with nerves on edge, and the whole thing carried through by an immense act of moral courage.

So, when we had done with the Gros Mer, no water shipped, no lives lost, so smoothly that I could have threaded a needle—well, a knitting-needle, then—I must say I rated rapid-shooting with ouananiche-fishing. Was it for this I had laid out fifty-dollars—the price that these rapids-specialists charged for the trip to Chicoutimi?

"Shall I shoot him?" asked LeBel, interrupting my sad little reverie. He was some sort of eagle hovering above us, probably with his nest on the neighboring cliffs. Barring some partridges, that bird was the only wild life we observed during the day.

Nature has arranged the rapids of La Grande Décharge (to avoid having them transposed by

literary artists), in climactic order; the farther, the worse. And now we were approaching Les Cedres, who were making noises much more like able-bodied rapids. I could see enough white water to please even my anticipation, and my men pulled up along a huge rock to reconnoiter. The water was high still, despite the drought, and glittered in the approaching noon. Down we crept, Néron with great skill keeping the craft under exquisite control; so much so that just as I had taken a deep breath of pleasure we shot to shore. "C'est trop," he shouted to LeBel, meaning that it was too dangerous in such a flood. And so we portaged around the worst spot.

Still much rapid remained, and I experienced more and more of the conventional sensations. I suppose the stream was running at fifteen miles an hour, maybe faster; rocks sat beneath the surface, with the water beguilingly unbroken over them. Gigantic flattened whirlpools swayed hither and away, and eddies boiled. Occasionally the whole back of the river would rise as if some gigantic rhinoceros were about to emerge, and now I began to realize the danger. It lay not in the speed of the stream, nor even in the rocks nor waves, but rather in these enormous spasms of the under water, the vast shiftings of surface, and the swirl of things. As our canoe fled down the sloping current, running at right

angles often to the apparent channel, a huge back-eddy would grab the bow, LeBel and Néron would dig into the water like racers, shouting comments on the direction to be taken. Pulls, slashes, push-ings, back-holdings, and we would scoot half-way across the river, swerve around a bowlder. Looking back I would see that we had escaped a a tremendous up-sweep of the current. Even experienced canoe-men cannot hope to navigate this river unless one of them be somewhat acquainted with it and willing to portage where the delights, though violent, promise violent ends.

We lunched in a comely nook of sweet-smelling firs and clean old granite; and the name of L' Ile Maligne now fell upon my ears. At L' Ile Maligne I was promised ouananiche and a real sensation. I reposed like one of the younger gods in Olympus's shade and listened to the event ahead of us, named by some poet L' Ile Maligne. Adventure has two moments of suffusing delight: that time when the summit of the event shines glitteringly ahead and one sets forward to it with hopes, warmed with conscious courage; the other when it is well past, and you see it in the after-glow of a deed well done. Or, as Browning has *Paracelsus* so beautifully say it:

> Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Mical,
> Two points in the adventure of the diver:

One—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge?
One—when, a prince, he rises with his pearl?''

At two o'clock we plunged.

L' Ile Maligne is a mile-long ridge of spruce-crowded rock that cuts the river like a granite quarter-moon. Down each side of it the waters race in uninterrupted rapids of great power. The banks of the mainland rise even steeper than this dorsal fin, which is the island. Consequently men infected with the desire to run La Grande Décharge have to carry the canoe from one tip of the moon to the other. And to do this requires a landing, which brushes Ulysses's adventure with Scylla and Charybdis for excitement. The tip of the moon-island is incurved a trifle, and the huge flow of water from the rapids above the island makes, in this basin, a maelstrom that would have delighted Poe. To land, your men must halt the canoe above this whirl until it is filling up—otherwise, if one enters it while the down-suction is taking place the canoe will be caught as by two hands and overturned. Then, having chosen the moment when the surface of the whirlpool is nearest level, the game is to drive across it at fullest speed, else the great whirl takes one out into the rapids and you are drowned in Scylla, or swept about the tip of the island into Charybdis, where you are drowned sooner. Of course if you upset in the whirl you are sucked down

and drowned at once. But there is this—if you do get to the island you have the best ouananiche-fishing in the world.

So, in the still brightness of the windless river reaches, we swept down upon our great moment. I saw ahead of me the sterile tip of the moon-island, backgrounded with firs, saw the gaunt cañon down which the river plunged in flashes of silver and blue. Néron's face was a study. Napoleon could not have scrutinized his first battle more sharply.

"Serieusement," he cried suddenly, and like a scared sheldrake flew downstream. I saw the heads of the twin rapids, gaping, white-fanged, down either of whose throats destruction gleamed.

"Vite," cried Néron. He was working grimly, the veins in his forehead standing out. We had entered the whirlpool. With brawny digs of the paddle, he escaped the periphery, crossed the center. And now, with the shore for comparison I could measure the swiftness of the flow *up*-stream.

"Encore," shouted Néron this time triumphantly. The two almost lifted the craft from the water in three or four great strokes. We glided by a shore-rock, by another. LeBel leaped out in the water. For a slim shaved second I wondered if Néron could keep the stern from those terrific rapids-claws. And then it was over.

I stood, not trembling exactly, but with a curious elation, on the tip of that isolate crescent isle, and looked at the sun-path down which we had run. Ile Maligne, you are well named. On both sides the demons of ill-luck made spectral noises that rose above the deep roar of the crashing torrents. Néron touched my arm to call my attention to the whirl which had tried to harvest us into its insatiable emptiness. A log was coming down. It was caught by those invisible arms, upended and sucked down as if by some hideous living force that must be fed. Truly the ouananiche are carefully guarded.

On a cloudy autumn day I think running the rapids would be a ghastly pleasure. But on that glorious crest of the sun-drenched summer the roar, the sense of speed, the passion of light had got into our blood and fired us with excitement. Even the cool grasses burned with light. And as I put together my rod again I knew that the wild gods would be with me. They could not fail in such a place, at such a time. I had reached their most highly fortified citadel. The three of us climbed along the rocks for a few hundred yards. Néron pointed to a ledge against which the quickened waters beat, and I cast into the turmoil.

"It is better that joy should be spread over all the day in the form of strength, than that it should be concentrated into ecstacies full of dan-

ger and followed by reactions." And of course we know that Emerson is usually right. But he was talking of indoor joys. On that day of days I was to pass from ecstasy to ecstasy, some of them full of danger, and the reaction did not come. I think I was lifted permanently to a higher level. Certainly I bounced up a full celestial notch when the fish struck. Please visualize the stage: back of me a gray precipice of eldest granite, on two boulders of which sat my men, alert yet almost Pan-like in their fitness to the scene. Before me a mad river, stampeding in a roar of white. Myself, whipped by the superlatives of a dozen Van Dykes into a rush of desire to catch just one ouananiche, standing on a block of stone against which the breathing of the stream throws waves of water. The waves rise to my knees, clutch my ankles, ebb away, and rush to the grapple again. Stir, tumult, ebb and flow, and the certainty that somehere beneath the surface my fish is riding that hurricane of water. He must be an epicure of sensation, for only an epicure would take the trouble to saddle the lightning there. I cast just beyond an atoll of foam, and, by all the river-gods, I hook him. This with those experts sitting on the bank, is the finesse of elation; for I 'm no great shakes of an angler, and have had to bluff it.

"C'est grosse," cried Néron, running up.

"Oui, oui, c'est grosse, vraiment," adds LeBel. One of them dances around on one side uttering directions in rapid French, the other itching, I know, to have his hand on the acrobatic rod. I hear neither the directions nor yield the rod. In front of me a fish, with a jaw like Demosthenes's and a neck like Samson's, is playing me. I don't flatter myself that the reverse is true. He makes me step lively along that ledge. I retire to escape being sucked into the next wave. He lets me go only so far. Either he is a prodigious fish or else has a prodigious nerve. I have managed a schoolroom full of restless brats more easily. "The most high-minded fish," says Dr. Van Dyke, "the cleanest feeder, the merriest liver, the loftiest leaper, and the bravest warrior of all creatures that swim." The man was describing that very fish I 'd hooked.

And now I am getting sullen, determined. I wiggle less, pull a little harder. Suddenly he jumps clear of the water to get a look at me. "Pip, pip," cry Néron and LeBel together. He decides to drop back into the stream, although I don't doubt that he could swim in the air as well. "Flesh vitalized by spirit," says Van Dyke, and again," he feeds on flies and his food is transformed into an aërial passion for flight"; and just at that critical instant I burst into laughter for wondering whether, by analogy, an aviator

should diet on flies. To rebuke me the fish soars from the water again, a living silver arrow, and the game is on.

It took forty minutes. More than once I had that fearful moment of suspense when it seemed that the line was empty and the rest of the struggle must be with—myself. But the red gods acquiesced to my desire, the purple-gleaming fish swam into Nëron's net, and while the white-topped rapids roared I felt a tinge of regret with my elation. Infinitely slim and graceful, colored with all the finest tintings of his home in the moon-and-sun-lighted pools, he seemed indeed the prince of fishes. The arc of his life was broken, but he had lived it like a rainbow, and no one minds when a rainbow passes, simply because it has been unimprovably beautiful. In the ouananiche, fishdom has achieved its glittering perfection.

After catching two more, the men girded themselves for the contest with L' Ile Maligne, which requires more endurance than playing a sperm whale. For the canoe had to be carried to the nether end of the island, and the last party had gone through so long before that the trail was grown closed in many a place. Also it led up a roof-like hill-side. And it was here that I came to admire my men more than for the subtleties of rapids-shooting which I did not understand.

This business I very well understood. I know exactly how heavy a canoe can grow; know how aggravating it is to pick one 's way through an uncut trail; how pestifying black flies can be upon the nape of neck. But add to weight and awkward bulk and flies and heat of July afternoon, some upright slopes set thick with underbrush and you have travail indeed,—that is what I, at the most experience-wearied, never had known.

Yet that is what those men confidently tackled. First Néron, then LeBel, would shoulder the boat, push like an elephant through the jungle, guided by the cries and choppings of the man ahead, who, incidently labored under a huge pack. Not to be shamelessly idle, I bore my fishing-rod, two loaves of bread, the landing-net, and a sweater or two. Not realizing that the trail would peter out or be so long, I had not taken down my rod, nor furled the net, nor secured the bread against the ravages of brush, nor counted on the speed with which those giants dispatched themseves along. Consequently in five minutes I was in a worse plight than the greenest greenhorn tenderfoot of a tyro, tearing along behind them, the net catching in one tree, the line in the opposite, the string that held the bread fairly snatching for branches as we passed, and the sweaters trying to act like Sir Walter Raleigh's cloak. I

was ashamed to call, ashamed to be lost. So, accompanied by the flies the others had aroused, I kept up; hugging the bread (now untied) to my vitals, stopping only to curse at the different catching of the lines and net, and tearing along breathlessly after the laden giants. Their voices sounded furious to me. "Will they demand another fifty," I wondered, "for such insane toil?" I pictured them irate, carmine-skinned, belligerent. When I emerged on the top of the mountain I found them sitting by the canoe, having a pipe, smiling. Instead of upbraiding each other or the wilderness or me, instead of being even sullen, these incorrigible Celts wiped the sweat and the flies from their jowls, shouldered the canoe again, and picked their way among the stumps and partridges down to the water. After a fair day's work it seemed a triumph of physique to accomplish such a carry with so little apparent fatigue; but to accomplish it in kingly spirits, that was a triumph of temperament. That Ile Maligne with rapids on either hand, and mosquitoes in the middle, I must repeat is well named.

Next to having a valet and a private secretary, my idea of the pampered life includes two guides like Messieurs Néron and LeBel. In my own residential wilderness one does without them for several reasons. On arriving at the end of a hard trip I am accustomed to say, "Now, Morris, the

Photograph by Père Courtois.

"WHERE THE OUANANICHE IS WAITING"

firewood!" and then I obediently cut some, however much my canoe-worn muscles creak. So having arrived at the end of a perfect day it seemed the last desirable item of delight that the perfection should continue into the evening. With all the feeling of a rajah I saw one slave smoothing a place to lay the balsam bed, the other assembling a fire and cleaning the fish. This was voluptuous indeed. I tried not to tilt over backward with conceit of myself for having conjured such a moment into being; but instead got out my rod and went upstream a little way.

Trust the ouananiche to take the conceit out of one if there be any in. Being now a veteran ouananicher I whipped the eddies a while confidently, then less confidently and finally with vanished esteem. None rose where dozens must have been. And just as a faint choler was rising in place of the fish, Evening took my chin in her hands and raised my eyes from the vain pools to receive what I was failing to accept: the blessing of perfect beauty.

Upstream lay such a vista as had held François and me in its spell the night before, but with this difference; this evening I was of it and not the mere spectator. My wooded isle lay midmost in the stream, and the cradling rapids, with silken hollows eight feet deep, raced at my foot. Over the stream, over the palisades of firs, tender eve-

ning caressed the shining shoulders of the wood-naiads lifted from green waters, and the glint of their tossed hair lit the twilight reaches of the river. The intoxication of motion, of the colored hour, of the remote spot filled the cup of pleasure for me, filled it almost. There could be no fulness of happiness alone. What did Néron care that this river, running from mystery into the deep still sea of dreams, was wrapping itself in purple dusk? What did LeBel, from whose pails came the authentic odors of good food? What did he care that the passing moment was plumed with immortal beauty? Such was their daily air. They lived on the peak of Darien and did not know it. And I wanted, most painfully, some other one to give me passionate assurance, if only with a nod, that the thing was seen with seeing eyes, treasured in a loving heart for the eternal future.

The same wistful emptiness marred a too-perfect evening. The setting was too exquisite for common tales. *"Fume un peu, parle un peu"*; that was the guides' habit, and, otherwheres, a good one. But this time the gods had conspired to show me unimagined things; and it were rudeness to ignore them. The crested hills had disappeared, and the waters had faded, when the forgotten moon arose, and brought back the wild

stream, now turned into a ghostly esplanade. It made our island magical.

That night we pitched no tent, but lay under crocus-colored skies while the moon trudged up the hill of heaven. I slept a while, then woke to mark its progress, and then slept again, my senses lulled by an invading peace.

CHAPTER XIX

LA REINE DU SAGUENAY

ALL roads and rivers in that part of the Province lead one, regrettably or not as you are minded, to Chicoutimi. And when we three had breakfasted on ouananiche fried in butter—possibly the most delicious morsel known—we set our caps for her, called by some one, in a moment of hallucination, the Queen of the Saguenay.

Two great rapids intervened. When we reached great La Vache Caille, which, next to the rapids of Niagara, is the most stately sight of waters rushing to a magnificent end that I have ever seen, I stood beside them, overwhelmed with sound and motion. Here all the beauties, that the river had hinted of before, reached perfection. The great waves dashed higher into whiter spray, the silken cradles were deeper and swayed to wilder music. These terraces of foaming water were impregnable. No boat could have gone a-gypsying down them. A man or a moose would have been battered into eternity in three swings of those threshing arms. And yet to gaze at that

hypnotic speed, to hear that vibrant roar, to gaze and listen overlong might cloud the reason. Heights do not entice me much, but I drew back from the brink of La Vache Caille sensible of its power. Marvelous, magnificent ecstasy of whitened water; it seemed like forsaking some just hidden knowledge to leave them and go on.

Just below the Vache Caille La Petite Décharge joins La Grande, and we paddled down swift water of the reunited streams until the Gervais rapids came to ear. Néron had been telling me how some Americans had insisted on trying the Gervais and been drowned. Looking down that mile of milk-white tumult it took less imagination to see why they had been drowned than why they had attempted the passage. Not even to uphold my status as American should I have wanted to attempt those very visible rocks, to say nothing of the invisible *remous* and *tourniquets*. Whereupon my men treated me to a real sensation. Down the torrent we ran, and had now entered, or so it seemed to me, this abominable rapid itself. "Are they crazy?" I thought. I now knew enough about side-currents, sudden heavings, the insidiousness of swirls, and the unsightability of rock-edges, to see that they were trying to satisfy my yesterday's craving for excitement. The craving had been much subdued, but they did n't know that. I determined to ap-

pear nonchalant at any rate. And the rate, may I add, was already excessive.

We were not far from the shore, going swiftly. The current was bound for midstream and a welter of white water, in which my newly experienced eyes told me a canoe would be no obstacle at all to drowning. The men were paddling hard. I did n't see that they made headway. We swirled about the end of a rock I had not noticed. The river sang, the rush increased. Néron yelled. They both stuck down their paddles and with two mighty heaves virtually lifted us out of that current and toward the shore. LeBel leaped out as before; the up-current helped him with the boat. In a brief instant I was standing on the rocks, just one canoe-length from disaster. "There 's where it happened," said Néron, pointing just a little farther out, and I saw where my fellow-countrymen had been less fortunate than I. "I 'm glad you changed your minds about going down," was all the satisfaction that I gave them.

We carried for a mile to a place where most of the danger was past and then they allowed me a little practice at bow paddle. Doing it yourself is about the only fun in running rapids, after the first freshness goes. But doing it is fun. And I was sorry when the river calmed down, the last riffle flattened out, the last swirl let go of the bow and dropped behind. We had come

from the firs to the fields, had climbed heights new to the soul, had met the red gods there, and come by strange highways home. And now it was ended.

As least I had had all, but the satisfaction of coming home. During those next hours of paddling between descending banks on a stream now steaming with midday the "it was ended" sensation was very acute. And nothing ahead offered much alleviation. At St. Dal a six-mile portage began, by cart of course, and then a short paddle would land us at Chicoutimi. The spirit of adventure slept.

And while it is sleeping I would offer a word of advice to men contemplating this trip. Go by all means to St. Joseph d' Alma. By all means engage Néron and LeBel. Start at the top of the river, fish from L' Ile Maligne. And proceed the next day down to see La Vache Caille. But then and there have the teams meet you at the bank and repair to St. Jo again instead of having those momentous memories clouded by lesser things on the way to Chicoutimi.

At Chicoutimi the spirit of adventure woke and cried for food, and Providence heard and bared her nipple. At five I had paid off my men and had seen them start the return journey with a certain homesickness. By six I was bathed, and by seven fed. At eight, thanks to Providence's strong

stimulant, I had climbed the hill back of the Catholic church, past the Catholic nunnery, and beyond the Catholic school to get a catholic view of Chicoutimi, when striding down upon me—you are always going up or down in Chicoutimi—came Phil Kimball, my pal of the Peribonka picnic.

"Hello," said he imperturbably, "I 'm glad you 've arrived."

"Well, I 'm surprised if you 're not," I said, because he was so imperturbable.

"I 'm not. There 's a chap at the hotel said you 'd left Roberval. Another heard you 'd gone to St. Joseph. Everybody knows about everybody else here."

"Does that inconvenience you?" I could n't help saying, and got a poke in the ribs for it. "What are you doing here?"

"Same old thing—missing parts."

"How 's the hotel?"

"Better, thanks." Phil laughed. "Of course we get the same things: *soupe aux tamates, porc, pommes de terre bouillées, thé, pudding aux pain.* These articles shall never pass my lips again, once I 've shaken the dust of this blessed country from my—liver."

Phil did not say the word blessed, but another, from which I gathered he had been fed up, not only with bread-pudding but with foreign society.

"I have found the real French-Canadian at last," I said, "at St. Joseph d' Alma—a mighty hospitable lot."

"Oh, yes," replied Phil drolly, "they are noted for their hospitality. They have been most hospitable to my money; they receive it generously. When I have to drive out to a farm they charge for the car, one dollar a mile, and because I 'm an American the miles are particularly numerous. *Voyez-vous?*"

"Well, they take your money courteously, anyway, old grouch," I said.

"Yes, they are not unjustly blamed for their courtesy. They do say, 'Oui, Monsieur,' no matter what you ask. This is surely the highest form of courtesy."

"I had to laugh at him, and this encouraged him to go on: "Their fad, you see, is to make an interesting story for you. So of course truth, being dull, rarely figures in it."

"You really mean that you have n't understood them."

"Well, who could? They and their French came over in 1600, and have been only slightly affected by the weather since. And speaking of the weather it 's been unspeakable here, astonishingly hot, anything above ninety in the shade and no shade, all the forests being on fire. The smoke

has been so thick that we have n't been able to see across the river on which I 've had to perch, or rather parch, for two weeks."

By this time we had clambered to the top of Chicoutimi and sat down by the monument of the first of the House of Price, *le Roi du Saguenay*. Phil had rid himself of his surface grouch and had begun to tell me of the good times he had been having with the habitants, and made me all the more determined to go live on a real habitant farm for a while. I was amazed at the view which these ten minutes of climbing had given us. At our feet the Saguenay, finally tamed to commerce, separated our house-clad hill from some great orange-colored cliffs shining in the last light of the tawny sun. Below, the river broadened to a full mile before it turned, and I could see green meadows and a line of homes, then the cliffs and distant line of mountain ranges which spelled intrigue for me. Toward the northeast there lay other, remoter, wilder regions than often meet the civilized eye, and I could figure out the passes that led through them to the upper waters of the Bersimis and that savage wilderness that has lured strange-dreaming men to the fatal Labrador.

Upstream was all field of cloth of gold with sun-glitter, and for a moment all the smoke and haze that hovered over the town turned beautiful.

The many great Catholic edifices, the church spires, even the columns of coal-smoke pouring up from the three tugs in the little harbor were etherealized. But *la Reine du Saguenay* was a rather tawdry-looking queen, energetic enough, but with all her favor gone, looking as I suppose Queen Elizabeth of England might have looked immediately after doing a little chimney-sweeping at Windsor Castle. But it was not hard to imagine the place as it looked two hundred years before, when the Jesuits had built a mission and the Hudson's Bay Co. a post. I had only to shut my eyes to see a few white buildings, gleaming on the hill against the eternal green of the great pines of that time, looking across to the immemorial encampment of the Montagnais on the opposing cliffs, looking downstream whence came their assistance in the spring, and upstream whither they sought, one the kingdom of God, the other the equally adjacent kingdom of the wild.

This tiny nucleus of civilization was right royally placed, and I do not wonder that the scattered families of the Saguenay—there were not a hundred around Chicoutimi in 1860—thought of the village tenderly on winter nights, looked to her for help, and, thanks to *la maison Price,* always got it. *Le Roi du Saguenay* was much more authentic than *la Reine.*

"When you stop dreaming," said Phil," we 'll eat."

Having been filled with the desire to live *à l' habitant* for a while, my fate now took me by the hand and led me into the very jaws of one.

There is, I forget to say, one street in Chicoutimi which is not laid out on the perpendicular. It is along this street that the business, the restauranting, the movie-ing, and the rest of the night life of Chicoutimi (culminating in nine-o'clock orangeades) take place. In order to miss none of the gaiety we had rather hastened through supper and were strolling down this street, a little late for the movies and a little early for the drug-store bacchanale, when I saw a sight that brought me up standing. The sight was a house so hospitably built, so charming with its curved roof and broad eaves, its gallery with settees and chairs, a profusion of potted plants and dignified sheltering trees, so altogether quaint and beautiful, set there on its lawn, that I stopped and stared. How, with a vision like that for model, these other house-owners could endure to live in their stodgy boxes of brick is a problem still beyond me. They managed it stoically enough, apparently, as Monsieur Joseph Guay's home is one of the very few remnants of early colonist style in the town. Just then Monsieur Guay came out on the porch,

and Phil, who of course knew everybody in the town, introduced me.

"Oh, yes, I knew you were coming," said this gentlemen; "Colonel Scott told me that you would fish for ouananiche. I expected that you would find me."

Monsieur Guay's expectations were based, as I found out later, on experience. Everybody hunting anything in the Chicoutimi region came to him for information. They sought information and found a friend in this big, upstanding, generous-hearted man—he had once kept a château, wrote much for the papers, knew everybody in the countryside, and was generally identified with the progress of the place. "Oh, yes, I do much organizing," he admitted. "Whenever any one wants a fishing excursion or a trip through the Province or to engage a chef or some timber limits they hear of me, even as you have done, and it is my pleasure to help them. Can I organize something for you?"

I told him that I would like to be organized on to a habitant farm on the edge of nowhere.

"If you will come here to-morrow at three I shall have it organized," he said with the assurance of Atropos." And now shall we have some beer?"

It was cold, delicious beer, enjoyed in a large low-ceilinged room in the company of our host's

wife and Mademoiselle Guay, a girl not yet twenty-one but with the poise and charm of the best French tradition. She had been educated in a convent and had had a year of Paris. A slim young banker, who was doing foreign service in one of the great bank's branches in Martinique, an extremely nice-looking banker, also had beer with us. He had come back home on the great quest, and I suspect that he has already been successful. I hope so, for they made a very attractive couple, this planning youth and provoking maid, who paid polite attention to our aged views while doubtless thinking of very other things.

To crown a delightful evening, Monsieur Guay took us up a hill to call on Monsieur Dubuc, one of the region's lumber-kings. I found still another pleasure here, for Monsieur Dubuc is one of that sort of men who take a very high polish. He had apparently worked into the control of large interests, but withal had neglected neither literature nor the arts. One charm of being rich in Chicoutimi is this: you can import pictures and plastic treasures and still live on the rim of the frontier. Monsieur Dubuc interspersed his criticisms of French-Canadian poetry with accounts of exploration to the north. It was a rare pleasure to listen to a man so keen, so well-informed, and so courteous as he. I would have let the

night slip by had Monsieur Guay not happened to know that he was leaving at dawn for Gaspé.

Monsieur Dubuc arranged for his hospitality to linger after him; and the next day Monsieur Guay motored me out to Lac Kenogami for lunch at Monsieur Dubuc's place, Villa Marie. The low, hospitable house was made more hospitable yet by a preparative drive of miles through a dark, eery wood. It was set at the end of the lake, and the view from it of high, wooded hills and the narrow, sky-reflecting water was restful.

"You have a choice to make," said Monsieur Guay on the way out. "Monsieur Dubuc puts his residence at your disposal if you would care to rest from your travels; but also a friend of mine, a real habitant, sails at supper-time down the Saguenay to St. Basile. That, too, is a chance you will not have again. It is too bad."

I had got used to being served dilemmas. The idea of loafing on the gentleman's premises, and enjoying the singular restfulness of that spot made a choice difficult. But the adventure lay the other way. And when I have to decide between luxury and the laborious but pregnant path, Tennyson's old *Ulysses* helps me out. Any one whose notions of Tennyson (notions doubtless carried over from the classroom days of first love and Elaine) are that he is an inspiration to pastry-cooks only should read that poem. Its

structure is of the immortal steel; only, unlike most modern poetic structures, the framework is wrought with a finished beauty. So I repeated to myself:

> Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravel'd world whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when I move.
> How dull it is to pause, to make an end.

And so I told Monsieur Guay to serve up his habitant.

The decision did not spoil our lunch, however, nor the subsequent ride on Lac Kenogami, a singular ribbon of water, twenty-two miles long and about a half-mile wide, with, to complete its singularity, two outlets.

"How dull it is to pause!" as Tennyson says. And how dull it would be, say I, if I should pause and tell all the things I was told about Chicoutimi! Information, once removed from the informer, falls dead, or at least somnolent. That is the reason that encyclopedias and guide-books are so exasperating. Perhaps if Mr. Bernard Shaw had written them they would at least be readable. But would they be informative? Can life be informative? Then why does every age burn its fingers on its appropriate fires? Even Christ bothered little to be explicit. As soon as you can define a thing it ceases to be that. Christ preferred to point the way. The world is not so

Photograph by Thomas Nesbitt.

SHANTY-CLOSING FOR THE SPRING.

much an asylum of the spheres (as my friend Rutherford apprehends) as a large-scale kindergarten. The few adults who visit us, and say a few kind words, usually say them over our heads. We object audibly, and often rather profanely (for children), at having to work out our individual salvations, at having to pay for our own humanity. But, since we never seem able to live deeper than we experience, the best thing is, with Ulysses again to

> Push off, and sitting well in order smite
> The sounding furrows.

Which, at 8 P. M., I did beneath a gusty sky, in the chaloup belonging to and peopled by Mr. Basile Villeneuve of St. Basile, Saguenay, P. Q.

CHAPTER XX

THE REALM OF VILLENEUVE

MONSIEUR GUAY had introduced me to the family Villeneuve—at least to a proper fraction of it—on the dock, said au revoir, and probably pledged a candle to St. Vitus for having whisked me off his hands so succinctly. He had gone and I was left in the midst of eighteenth century France, on a little tug which was to transport me to the seventeenth in a few hours' tugging. My fellow-habitants began to bring their personalities into focus.

The tug-owner and father of the group, my pilot and host, was a tall thin man of seventy-one, with hair that would have intrigued a home-hunting mouse, a face that expressed a toleration of things, though without any foolish blindness to their irony, and a temperament that had to relieve itself in a burst of song or a jig every little while.

Basile Villeneuve's son, thirty-two, was more reserved than his father, but also with a tendency to song, and that in a warmly agreeable voice. Dark,

unshaven, spare, and strong, he yet had a certain Celtic softness of demeanor, suggesting that he would not be too rough with *les jeunes filles.*

These two were the crew. In addition I was introduced to the Bouchards, father, mother, and Thaddée, who were also about to visit St. Basile, and a young man studying at the seminary, Arthur Fortier, affable and headed priestward. The rest of the boat-load, about a score of women and children, were part of a family whom we should drop en route.

"Circumstances? I make circumstances!" was Napoleon's favorite chirrup at fate. I should like to have seen him try a hand at those Canadian circumstances called the weather. It never rains but it interrupts something. We had no sooner got clear of *la Reine's* skirts and out into the current, which is far from despicable when the tide is ebbing, than a thunder squall opened upon us, the Saguenay rose and beat upon our tug, and we flew. It was all very well as a spectacle, but I had desired to see the shore instead of the ship's hold into which half the parish seemed to have crowded. I went up into the little wheelhouse where Monsieur Villeneuve was singing to himself. "Je suis gai—toujours gai," he said naïvely, and that was no mere boast.

If you will imagine the Hudson River above Tarrytown in the days of the early Dutch, you

will get some idea of the present Saguenay from Chicoutimi to the capes. After a scattering of houses opposite the one town, in a bay called L' Anse aux Foin, comes a wild bleak river a mile wide, with wooded palisades, and but two or three places where colonist lamps betoken a farm-house in a cove.

In the unaffected blackness of the night we drove before the wind, old man Villeneuve's three score years and ten on the river making him certain of his course. The swish of the waves, the slashing of the gust did not drown the merriment from below. What the French-Canadian cannot endure he laughs away. And presently I wandered thither.

It was like the diminutive of one of *le Sieur de Champlain's* excursions. I found a cabin atmosphered with tobacco smoke instead of air, lighted with a bracketed lamp, the wall-bunks carpeted with babies and bundles, the sitting-places filled with habitant femininity, and the few males leaning against doorways singing to an accompaniment of chatter. I began my interrogations on young Thaddée Bouchard, a pleasant-faced youth of twelve, and soon found out why he was entirely charming: he hailed from St. Joseph d' Alma. It is useless to pretend that communities have not their own esprit which dyes all dwellers therein: St. Joseph d' Alma has, Roberval has. And

otherwise, what would be the use of having grandfathers?

My evening passed between listening to the cabin chorus and visits to the pilot solos, with an occasional peering into the murk. I learned that we were to tie up at La Descente des Femmes to await the dawn. This place had been named after some *sauvagisses,* who, their spouses being ill or injured, were enjoined to go for help; and since the shores of the Saguenay are somewhat steep they descended at La Descente, with gratitude, I suppose, in their hearts for its facilities. My imagination, always rather fervid in the dark, had pictured the place so vividly named as a site on the cliff where a somewhat smoother precipice than most might have enabled the squaws to wrap their aprons behind them and slide to freedom. Nor was I dispossessed of the notion at once. For when we drove to shore I saw lanterns high above, heard enough shouting and social pother to dock a *Lusitania,* and observed that the tide, which rises some twenty-odd feet, had slunk away, leaving innumerable rungs of a slippery ladder as our only means of exit. *L' ascente des femmes,* it struck me, would be far more ticklish than any amount of descending, and I wondered just how we were going to hoist the babies from the hold. But, stopping their chorales for a moment, the women and children

clambered up without a whimper, the men expedited the bundles and babies after them, and the whole incongruous host of us marched at midnight on an unsuspecting household.

The habitant of the Saguenay is by heart a social creature. But by nature he is rendered solitary. His farm is separated by space and by the seasons from intercourse with every other farm. To be sure, he is not lonely on his own plot of wilderness. His own progeny are enormously plentiful, and a homestead sheltering a family of twenty, say, cannot be considered a hermitage. But on the annual or even semi-annual occasion when he gets away from home and takes his trip to town, he is bound to lose no moment of that occasion in sleep. This I was now about to find out.

We entered the roomy and well-lighted kitchen of a cousin Villeneuve. I had had a long day and already a longish night, and hoped that couches or at least places on the floor would soon be shown us. Instead the daughters of the family began to spread the table, a desultory song arose from here and there, the men were already comparing crops, the women gossiping, and I, disliking to fly in the face of unanimity, joined the children in a brave effort to keep awake. Of these I could not decide which were the most stoic: the babies on the floor, the youngsters on the stools,

the children on chairs, or Thaddée and I, the travelers, on a lounge. All were equally pop-eyed and uncomplaining. It was after midnight; we were supposed to catch the tide at three. To bridge the interval we were treated to a taste of dandelion-wine, so good that I inquired the recipe:

1 pint of dandelion flowers
2 pounds of sugar
1 gallon of water
½ cake of yeast
10 days of waiting, and then it can be bottled, cooled, and consumed.

Soon we were summoned to the communal meal. Large bowls of curdled milk were passed around, thick slices of the best white bread in the world, pots of wild-strawberry or wild-raspberry confiture, the most delicious known, and pitchers of fresh milk. On such was Abraham's son, Isaac, brought up and fattened for sacrifice, and as I saw aunt and offspring eagerly dipping curds and whey from the same bowl I knew that this was the original family-arity.

And now the spirits of all rose, and a communal hubbub with them. Never have I seen such enthusiastic conversation. The simian theory was at once exploded, for monkeys were never in it. Instead of the ordinary give and take of repartee, the sides seemed organized to out-chatter each other. An innocent remark

would be responded to by a volley of objection, and that in turn stemmed by a platoon of men and women up in cackling arms. My helpless ears were deafened by it. Having reached the apex of their vocal powers they began to call their limbs into play, voices getting higher, arms getting wilder, until I feared that I was to be present at a murder. It seemed as if I had been listening to devastating revelations of wickedness; the one side refuting them as preposterous, the other backing them up. Suddenly the squall blew by, and both sides paused to take a drench of milk. I asked Thaddée what it was about; and he explained that the salmon season had begun on the twentieth of June last year according to one crowd, and on the twenty-first according to the other. So much for Celtic chat.

By now, I thought, I could rightfully hope for bed. But it seemed we were to have some music first. And real music it was, coming from the heart, the racial heart that beat as warmly on the Saguenay as ever on the Séine. Closing my eyes I fancied myself in this family's ancestral kitchen in Normandy as there followed one another the old songs, "Sur le Pont d' Avignon," "A la claire Fontaine." In deference to my language they attempted that song just then sweeping the Saguenay, "It 's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary," and we parted for our respective

berths in the best of humors about 1 A. M. Possibly this was in deference, too, to symptoms which I could control no longer. At any rate my yawns did the infants a good turn.

Oh how gray it sometimes is the morning after, especially when only two hours after! Thaddée woke me. I stumbled into my shoes and the chaloup, and remember my first astonishment at the sight of La Descente des Femmes. Instead of a female-flattened slide I saw a vast sloping meadow, backgrounded by cliffs as imposing in the dawn as the Yosemite's. And there in the green lap of rolling pastures nestled five white-painted homes with their incurved roofs, their ovens of clay, their multitudinous out-houses; a miniature settlement, guarded by the eternal granite on three sides and the stark river on the fourth. Herein the lifeblood of the Loire country was safe from molestation by the world. As we cleared the harbor the sun tinged the gray dawn with rose. I realized that I had found a new kind of buried treasure.

The next hour was very interesting to me, for I was approaching a place intended for an indefinite stay. In the shifting lights of the fresh morning the Saguenay, now utterly without habitation, seemed a wider, wilder, stormier, prehistoric Hudson; and I was momentarily glad that I had not tried it in a canoe. I had been dis-

couraged from canoeing it by people as far away as Montreal. And the French in Quebec, Roberval, and Chicoutimi, disliking water, had urged its dangers on my imagination until I felt the very fool for having suggested it to them. "You will be drowned," was the common first expression, "or at least marooned." "Do not consider such a thing," had said good Colonel Scott, finally dispelling my fond dream of going from Lake St. John to the St. Lawrence by canoe. It is true that the thunder-squall of the evening before, the present tossing tides of sullen gray had argued with them. "Idiot to have conceived it," thought I, "but—" And the "but" stuck. Instead of finding the shores of the river at right angles to the water as I had been led to expect, it seemed to me that there were many grassy retreats where one could outstay bad weather. And I sighed for Fred. My sigh was cut short by our lurching around a promontory, whereupon St. Basile swam into my ken, a tiny harbor, a hill, a cozy little chapel, a farmhouse and barn, and behind all, the mountain-sides rising into cloud. Except for the wavering column of blue smoke from the farm there was small sign that others existed in this world. There were no means of withdrawing from this place other than by the brackish, cold, and treacherous Saguenay, for beyond the near mountains lay others and no road.

I was really a prisoner of nature and the family Villeneuve.

The rest of this chapter is written of another world. From the moment I disembarked with the family Bouchard—the rest of the travelers had remained at Descente des Femmes—I was in New France. The period was of the last great Louis, but the place was so far removed from even him that no edict could ruffle the remoteness of our realm. We were invulnerable alike to misfortune or to fortune, and also to the transportation companies. Nobody, I learned to my consternation, would likely leave the place for months. They had not answered my queries in Chicoutimi so clearly. I was squatted there on a St. Helena slanting at an angle of thirty degrees into the hostile river. No mail arrived, no groceries, no bills. We were sufficient unto ourselves. And that this may be the more easily comprehended let me tabulate the items that go toward the making of a realm.

Take a tidal river, preposterously deep and two miles wide, two mountain ranges that admit a fertile valley, and a vast hinterland of game-rich wilderness, and you have the raw materials. Choose a cove between the ranges, build a boathouse, a shrine, shelters for your family and your animals, and arrange a plot of ground for cemetery. Near the house plant your tobacco and your

kitchen garden, further back your wheat. See that Noah supplies you with two of all the domestic cattle. Your belled cows will browse in the bush, your sheep in an upper pasture, your pigs in the dooryard, and your poultry about the door. From the stream in your valley you draw trout, and from the river salmon, wild strawberries grow on the slopes and other berries in the clearings. There is kindling at hand, and logs for the drawing from the forest. Partridges accommodate themselves to your gun in their season and venison in plenty, while afar range caribou and moose and wolves. The realm is yours. You have your flocks and herds, your women and your other beasts of burden; and when the twilight gathers, while your wife is doing the last chores you can sit on the porch and ruminate on the wealth of your lands, the work of your hands, and the beauty of a world undisturbed by tax-collectors. I know of no other place in the world today where the conditions of ancient freedom are to be enjoyed like this; the wide liberties of Daniel Boone unshadowed by the dollar-mark, unflecked by the frothings of the bolshevik. This was to be my realm for as long as I chose.

I mounted the semi-precipice that led to the farmhouse and met my hostess, a well-preserved old lady, agile as a grand-daughter, with a fine carriage, a finely furrowed face, and an almost

Indian-like beadiness of eye. Then I stepped out on the porch and into the presence of such a view as only those who live on the east shore of Paradise can comprehend. It was still early morning. Deep shadows from the cliff, on which I was to live, still lay on the river far below; and the two protecting ranges, which enclosed our valley, still harbored sunny clouds. Far across the noble stream rose a great palisade, one bit of which, a sheer wall of granite hundreds of feet high, is called Le Tableau. An orange light bathed this wild rock, and filled with an uncanny radiance the primeval forest on its head and shoulders. Up the river and down the river, as far as the near ranges would let me see, swept a huge panorama of ever-changing color on cliffs that never changed. Not joyless but stern gods had shaped those shores. Great bays, and greater heads of virgin stone not yet decked with the fussings of humanity, ran into the distances. These grim headlands seemed stone shafts from the incorruptible and central earth. And that they might not be too severe they were clothed in flowing shadows and overflowing sun. It was like the sweep of a vast eagle's wing, this view, and had seemed good to the eternal eye. To mine it seemed a very thunderbolt of scenes, and I knew that I should live much on that porch.

Now I set about learning how to be king of a

realm. I had opportunity to educate myself in everything from colt colic to—I was going to say midwifery, though that particular exigency did not arrive. (Only twice in the history of the family had a doctor stopped at the place.) We breakfasted late, for farmers: the habitant does not compete with the sun or anybody else. After our pork and tea Thaddée and I made the rounds of the various sections of the family, watching, perchance helping. Down at the harbor they were setting salmon-nets and painting the tug. Up in the raspberry-patch vast droves of children were picking berries. On the mountain-side trees were being felled for an additional clearing, which would soon be burned. The mother was in the cold kitchen making butter, the grandmother was spinning, the daughters ranged from milking the cows to cooking the next meal, and the sons were busy with the hundred outdoor occupations consequent to realming it. All were incredibly industrious, all appeared happy, and when any two were gathered together they became swiftly voluble.

"Tell us how your ladies live in New York," said Madame Basile one afternoon. "Perhaps we would like to change our residence."

So I strung together the events of a society matron's day from her breakfast in bed, through bridge-party, theater supper, and all the social

press of it to the headache on the morning after.

"*Hein,*" sniffed the good old lady, "I think we shall stay here. It would wear us out." I smiled, for she was about to cook a meal for eighteen of us, after which she would scrub the floor, in case the daughters were all milking. I wondered whether the charming old ladies of seventy in New York would not think that their chores of opera and chaperonage were the less arduous.

All leisure hours of the women were spent in floor-scrubbing and it made me indignant. After chapel in the evenings the men of the realm would assemble, eight or nine of them, in the kitchen to talk and smoke and spit. There were lots of spittoons; but the callous males ignored them, preferring to maculate the floor, which would be rendered immaculate the next morning by the elbow-and-back aches of the women. Why these overworked creatures did not knife their males in the night I do not know. Certainly their day's toil in the necessary round was long enough to have made unnecessary labor poison to their souls.

Alas, reality, even in one's own monarchy, is not an Arabian Night's Dream. From morning till night these people wrested a living from the lively hours of summer, in the hope that it would put them over the eight months of winter when death lay on field and river. In King Basile's

castle there was no bathtub, no furnace, no magazine, no book, no telephone, no art, no music, no little thing with which to bridge those hours of tedium and melancholy which must come to souls about to gird their loins for further flight. How I longed to give them a desire for one of these; but it would have been acting Satan's rôle in the Garden. A victrola might have precipitated a revolution; and of those there are enough in the world. A book might have stirred up an exodus; the place itself was paradise.

And in this paradoxical paradise, that lacked all the comforts, they were happy. There was no doubting that. Smiling was the key in which their life was lived. From child to grandmother, everybody smiled. The children were a never-ending amazement to me, being healthier, handsomer, and happier than any race I had ever come across. I got to know them well. Thaddeé, Étienne, Georges, and I comprised a fishing-squad, with a purpose. It was on the third day that I got this up. Those days were very hot, but each meal there came to my table pork, swimming in its own fat. It was incomprehensible to me, with chickens, ducks, geese, trout, salmon, sheep, calves, and the wilds to call on for variety—incomprehensible and loathsome. I was an emperor in the raw, at least with everything heart might

desire about me, yet must my meals be solely of that vomitable stuff? Merci! So the fishing-squad spent its afternoons, first on the near-by brooks, then on remoter lakes which were sprinkled about the land. And it was on these hikes that my knights prattled to their lord of everything under the sun in surprisingly pure French. It was their elders who garbled their tongue and cut the corners of its idioms and drugged it with Anglicisms; the youngsters drew from a deeper well.

Never shall I know such deference again. The scene is noon. The squad is not sure that I may want to fish. But do you suppose they dance around and plague me with questions? Then suppose again. They are lapping up their inevitable pea-soup with great round eyes upon me. But they are silent, cheerful, and as beautiful as always are the untamed woods-bred young. The little girls have eyes of deep and entrancing loveliness, as if they knew that now was their time of life, before they are saddled with a hulking master. They will go a-berrying. Will we go a-fishing? That is the question which the squad long to know. It is fun to tickle their anxiety just a little.

"It is really too hot for any trout this afternoon, don't you think, Étienne?"

"Not at the Lac aux Foin, Monsieur Maurice," says Étienne, with a breathless look in his blue eyes.

"But that is pretty far, is n't it, Georges?"

"I will carry the rod, Monsieur," very quietly, but very earnestly.

"What do you think, Thaddée, is it worth trying, this afternoon?" I pretend to be very much on the fence. Their instant anxiety is unloosed a peg; they know what he will say.

"It is worth trying, if you would enjoy it," says Thaddée, and of course I, thereupon, would. Instantly the squad deserts its strawberry-tart and rushes for the rods that line the outer wall of the kitchen. I get the bottle of fly-dope, thread my way through the maze of brats upon the floor, (the trout-squads of coming years), and we mount the trail, breathless, they with joy and I with the slope. Barelegged, barefooted, they fly up that wall of rock in the amazing manners of the children of Pan, chattering like red squirrels all the while. For manners I recommend our butlers to them.

Next to the saint who sponsors Canadian pigs the saint who looks after habitant offspring must have a busy time. I could never understand how the mothers could keep tabs on them. The marvel is not that one should be missing but that they

should miss one now and then. But in a lonely realm there are advantages in having a family of thirty—help in the berry-season, lots of birthday parties, a major league of ball-players if you like, and a greater distribution of the flies in any given room. Consider, however, the disadvantages: thirty beds to make a day, sixty potatoes to peel for dinner, ninety cups of tea to brew per meal, and, if every one does his duty at Christmas time, 870 gifts to be exchanged, in addition to the stream of maladies, bruises, tears. In no matter how well-regulated a household some child is always squalling. Some of the part-songs of grief which rose to the Villeneuve roof when the flies were bad or when some one was choking on a cookie,—ah, Mon Dieu!

For a moment I must revert to the black fly. The fly in the ointment of the Saguenay is nothing metaphorical. The long, windless twilights invited him from the gloomy woods, for flies like life and jollity and people. As P. O. D. says, "They desert in the most heartless manner the cows and horses they have lived with all winter and rush with a glad shout to the first person they see." This might seem to prove flies fickle. But they are not fickle. I know thousands of flies who had known me only casually and yet persisted in a most profound attachment

for me. But fly ethics are not what I reverted for; rather an ethonologic discovery I made, being nothing less than a new theory of gesture. Talk, as all scientists agree, originated in the fly-season. There is so much to say. Men began to talk then, for they simply had to say it. And they found the talk diverting. But they could not afford to leave off scratching and warding off the insects whilst discussing them. So they continued the energetic motions of the limbs while, for the first time, relieving their souls in exclamation; and since those motions proved of almost equal importance to the things said, they have carried over from the fly-season to the rest of the calendar and are known as gestures.

Flies rank children above all other food. It is not unusual to see a conical mound of flies on the kitchen floor, and, on approaching it, disturb enough of them to discover underneath a baby with a piece of cake. All sanitary rules seem unheeded in the backwoods. A little bother with some cheese-cloth in the spring would eliminate the myriads of insects. Insectlessness is a mark of civilization.

Another is man's regard for woman's pleasure. One evening the young Basile was out sailing around alone in his boat. Two of the female slaves, having worked their fourteen hours, were

down at the river's edge trying to cool off. There was room in the boat, no errand that conflicted, and they stared at it with the wistfulness of the marooned.

"Would n't you like to go with him?" I asked them.

"Oh, yes, we never get away from here," said one.

"Then why in heaven's name don't you?" I asked, impatient at the petty selfishness of the man. For answer, that helpless Celtic shrug, the most maddening motion of an ineffective will on earth. It always kills in me any sympathy for the shrugger.

In contrast to the incontestable brutishness of the life to which I was a witness there were numberless nuances of charm and loveliness. At the beginning of the twilight time we went to chapel, the little private tiring-place for souls, perched on the momentous cliff. For twenty minutes aching backs, fretted minds, despairful spirits found solace in the symbols of eternal good. The satisfaction that these people got from their simple ritual and the telling of beads seemed but another proof of Christ's great statement, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within." Their faces shone with the inner light, and we left the little chapel in more charitable mood, as

is the inevitable blessing that attends a pause at God's threshold, whether one be Catholic, Quaker, or lonely Indian.

And after chapel the men usually sat on that world-envisaging porch smoking, telling tales, until day had resolved itself into night. Sometimes they sang for hours. I shall never forget those evenings; for more poignant than the folk-song of Norwegians in their green valleys, more alive than the crooning of the darkies in our South are these airs that they sang with full-voiced abandon. And despite their lilting rhythms and gay words, they are full of pathos. They seemed to me the songs of a race without a country. For these French loved passionately the France of yesterday; the France of to-day is no longer theirs. When France disestablished the Church, she alienated these century-old patriots. They are Canadian now. But Canada lies broad from sunrise to sunset, and only a fraction of it is French.

"Do you speak English?" I asked one once.

"Do you speak Canadian?" he replied sullenly.

They are but a part of Canada, wherein they once were all; and they are no longer a part of France, for whom their fathers suffered incredibly. Consequently these intensely loyal souls have only their ancient faith on which to lean; the

church is their only native-land now. So when I listened to their songs, beautiful with unexpected turns of melody, I was listening to the heart of old France, sad beneath her gaiety.

I think (to touch a delicate subject once for all) that I understand why the French-Canadian did not enlist more readily for the war. By doing so he would have been helping France, and France had dealt a blow to his church. He would have liked to help the English, for he realized that their destinies were inextricably bound together. But his counselors said No. The war was far away. It was dangerous. It would cost money. And it was principally to preserve their new enemy of the spirit from being crushed. These were enough reasons for not joining in a hazardous undertaking. Therefore, not knowing the rest of the facts, they did not join. Canadian patriots of Saxon blood are wisely trying to forget the fearful injustices that this point of view brought about. The English-speaking minority in Quebec Province is offered many opportunities to practise Christianity. It avails itself of them to an extent that would amaze the critics of the race, were everything known.

From thoughts of these peoples tied to each other, uncongenially, in a sort of Siamese affliction, and with the chain chorus of "L' Allouette"

in my ears, I would go up to my straw mattress and sleep the sleep of the habitant, long, deep, and continuous.

Cheerfulness certainly puts the thumbscrews on Fate. I usually awoke to laughter downstairs, and always to chatter. The women would be cooking the breakfast pork, the elder daughters combing the youngers' hairs, the men shaving by the kitchen mirror, old man Basile in stocking-feet and furzy beard doing a jig, scaring the pigs from the pantry, or dislodging the hens from the sill. You might have supposed that we were living on the fat of the land instead of on sempiternal sowbelly, you might have surmised that Fortune had nothing more to offer, that the future could contain nothing of disquiet, naught of disaster. Fate had been cornered by a smile. Only their minds were asleep; their hearts were awake and hopeful. How much better than to have busy minds but calloused hearts! Of such is not the Kingdom of Heaven, and that 's sure. On the contrary how near was St. Basile's realm to the Kingdom—and yet what worlds away!

CHAPTER XXI

THE UNDISCOVERED SAGUENAY

THE conventional preparation for the remark, "Oh, yes, I 've seen the Saguenay," is this: The tourist boards one of the excursion-boats at Montreal or Quebec along with some hundreds of his kind, is taken by night up to Chicoutimi where he usually goes to the movies, not having time to visit the Indians at Ste. Anne, thence is steamed down the river again, pausing at the great capes for a moment that he may rid his system of their effect by some genial ejaculations, and so home. If he feels that he really ought to see the country better, he lays off at one of the big and conventionally expensive hotels at Murray Bay or Tadousac, and takes a drive or two.

This is all very well for the steamship companies, and it does n't injure the Saguenay. But it seems an unnecessary waste of opportunity for people, who really care about such things, to brush by one of the most impressive sights of our glorious globe, and to miss acquaintance

with one of our planet's kindliest peoples simply because there are no facilities offered for a real acquaintance. If I were an enterprising transportation company I would organize houseboats on which picked parties might dally with the gods while drifting from cape to cape of this mystery-haunted stream. Doubtless the present system of rushing people through makes tons of money. But I thank Pan and old Triton with his wreathed horn, that the horrible contagion of seeing things quick did not do me out of discovering the Saguenay for myself. Discovery is *the* spice of life.

Early one morning of turreted cumuli and sweeping sun young Basile, Fortier, and I set out for the valley of the Ste. Marguerite. The road mounted Le Côte de la Lune, surely a charming name for an eastern range, and then debouched us into virgin forest. Although July, the birds here were still singing, possibly for the very freedom of the North. Hermit thrushes that had hunted shelter in the wood-lots of Pennsylvania, had given thanks for a mountain-side in the Catskills, and had had to be contented with a forest county or two in the Adirondacks, found in Canada empires of solitude. Hermit-thrushes do not care to appear before the public.

If I were a hermit, thrush or human, I would choose the valley of the Ste. Marguerite for my hermitage. The river is not large, nor noisy; the

banks are soft with grass or silent with firs; for variety there are a few rapids, but mostly quiet waters flow reflectively along; and the basin is among the most surprising in Canada. Here the mountains rise higher than the Saguenay's, the gorges give an impression of grandeur that is rare in eastern America, and the magnificent forest is untouched by fire. Both Monsieur Guay and Sir William Price have since told me that they consider the trip down the Ste. Marguerite more surprisingly beautiful than any other trip in the Province. Like most other covetable lands this region has been leased to a private club; but Basile had standing permission, and the day was ours.

Young Fortier was to be a priest. I could not conceive how a youth, on the threshold of the world and fond of the world, could renounce the world.

"Have you never gone buggy-riding?" I asked him.

"Non."

"Do you never want to go buggy-riding?"

"Non."

"Why?" And that made him blush, for he was too modest to say that he felt called to the priesthood, too orthodox to admit that a call to go a-courting might exist at the same time, and too polite to call me down.

Whereupon Basile sang him a song not usually included in the books, a song about a young man and *sa blonde* with a pleasantly carnal chorus and a charming air. But I do not believe the trees shone greener to Fortier for all that. Thinking that he had been teased enough I turned on Basile, still bachelor.

"Why do you continue to disgrace the county, Basile, thirty-two and unmarried? How do you expect to complete your quota of children if you do not begin? What will the priest say, the Government say? For shame!"

Basile smiled and intimated that there was time yet. "It can all be finished in two weeks," he said.

"How 's that? I don't see how you ever find a girl in this region; don't see how you get to see her often enough to be sure that she 's the one. How will you go about it, Basile?"

"It is easy," said the young man with that smile that led one to believe he knew what he was talking about; "perhaps the priest will come to me, as you do, and say, 'Basile you are lazy, but I think I have the girl for you. Her father has two hundred acres. If possible you might see her after church next Sunday; she is expecting you perhaps.' So I know that all is to be easy. I find her after church and we have a little walk in the woods and perhaps a little talk, and if we

are attractive to one another, I go *faire les de mandes du pere, comprenez-vous?*'' I nodded but said, ''What if you don't like her?''

''If she is pretty, if she is rich, I will like her.''

And the dickens of it is, that 's so. He will not only like her, but she will submit to him with a loyal grace and have twenty children by him and scrub the kitchen-floor every morning and milk the cows and knit his socks while he is making his shoes; and in their old age they will adorn the countryside with grandchildren and filled barns. What books are to the rest of the world, conservators of custom and wisdom, the family is to habitant-land. They need no books. The illustrious lawyer, Monsieur Gonsalve Desaulniers told me, ''On a peur du livre chez nous.'' Monsieur Dubuc told me, ''It is better for them that they have no books.'' Monsieur Desaulniers is esteemed a scholar in France, and Monsieur Dubuc is a man of culture; but they understand their race. These pastoral children might disquiet themselves about their daily bread if they could read. I am glad that progress can revolve about them and leave their healthy core untouched. From the loins of the Puritans sprang one great influence that made America; and from the calm of these people comes the salutary slowness and singleness of purpose that will help to keep Canada from flying off the whirling periphery of

progress. If the method of having backward beaus and bashful brides brought together by the local shepherd seem ridiculous, consider the results: a contented life, a sheaf of little ones, and no divorcées.

Out of that storehouse of amiable qualities nature, from Talon to Laurier, has drawn material for many a solid deed, and will. In my more irritated moments I thought that habitant-land was but a human farmyard. But despite the habitants' parsimony, their lack of ambition, their cruelty to animals, and their disregard for truth, I came to see that they were children of nature; that their parsimony was the result of living in a frugal climate, that their domestic life bred content, and that the Celtic reminders of sunnier France made their speech of lighter import than to Saxon temperaments. Of politeness, of hospitality, of passive latent energy they were the masters. They would make good neighbors, they really did prefer religion to rubies, and they could be stubbornly loyal to a conviction. That is much to say.

Those days on the Ste. Marguerite were the climax of my visit to the realm of St. Basile. With a slight infusion of the comforts of civilization life could conceivably reach its richest there. With air of Elysian purity, and water pure as the air, with wealth of stream and pasture, wood

and wilderness, and scenes varying from cozy to sublime, one needed only access to the vivifying currents of the city to make life rounded, perfect. Access and then withdrawal to one's realm again! Could a country offer more than this? Could a man ask more? The undiscovered Saguenay will yield all this to him who seeks it.

And now the urge to be afoot again was on me. I said good-by to my fishing-squad, walked for the last time up the Côte de la Lune to survey that magnificent gulf between the ranges which sloped to the blue Saguenay. My unrest had been caused by a strange event. We four had been a-trouting in the deep woods, when the vast stillness had begun to hum, to buzz; and I saw, small against the sky, the flying-boat pass over and on down the river. In an instant the charm of playing Crusoe had vanished, the woods were become my prison, the chatter of the children unimportant. If I had had a rocket I should have shot it across their path. One talk with Rutherford, one evening with Kenny & Co.—what a priceless commodity just one word from those friends of the now long past. My vacation had been called.

But it was one thing to determine to leave St. Basile, another to get away. The excursion-boats did not stop at this speck of human habitation. The Villeneuves were too busy, their tug too expensive for me to charter for private use.

The next trip to Chicoutimi would be just before the ice made in the autumn. And I didn't want to go to Chicoutimi.

Luckily the Bouchards needed to visit at La Descente des Femmes where some more of their 480 cousins lived. Accordingly I determined to go that far with them. Possibly some boat might call there in due course. So after an early chapel we set forth in the lingering light of late July. I was genuinely regretful. For some weeks I had lived a new life, story-book life, the "Swiss Family Robinson" life. Those who read romance enjoy it, those who look on it share it; but those who live it, alone know it.

At my next home I found a piano, and some one to play it. The piano, let me add, was no slouch of an instrument with octaves at war with one another, but had an authentic voice that did not deride the laws of physics. And the daughter had surprisingly good taste and ability. In a careless moment I played one of the two tunes that linger on from my musical mis-education. To my surprise, after supper the plantation began to assemble—young men in shoes evidently cut to wear, young women in eventful Sunday clothes. The assumption was, I found out, that I was going to entertain them with a concert. Though infinitely resolute when it came to talking French, I could not quite see myself giving a

Photograph by Père Courtois

piano recital on two tunes to make a habitant holiday.

"Will not the daughter play?" I asked my host.

"Après vous, Monsieur"—the classic phrase at last!

To cut a long concert short, we had a very healthy evening. I never perspired so much in my life. Outside it was July; inside it was the fiery furnace, augmented with two lamps which were held close to my head when the time came to accompany the prima donnas of the family. The eldest girl and I played for a while in the most polite rotation. Considering that she lived on the brink of an uncultured desert, that her only teachers had been in the town of Chicoutimi, and that her hands were not preserved from the wash-tub or the garden for the sole practice of arpeggios, her playing was extraordinary. What would I not have given for a couple of Paderewski's melodious fingers to have been in the running, to have been able to show those music-starved people the glory of the instrument! What audiences are hidden on those farms! One would be stolid indeed not to respond to the hunger expressed by their attitude that night: a row of children on the floor, rapt and eager, a row of their elders on chairs and lounges and around the wall, and sundry faces poked through the windows or doorways, faces whose chief distinguishing human

fact was that they were invariably longer than they were broad, yet faces that shone with a far-away delight for a moment when their hearts were brushed by the wings of melody.

At length I had a bit of inspiration. I asked them to sing "O Canada." It is a recent national air, both dignified and beautiful, and it has swept French Canada. It resembles the great Russian hymn enough to show why the people are already fond of it; it differs to show plainly how this peaceful countryside differs from that greater and more vividly passionate people overseas.

It would have been fun to stay there, fish in those brooks racing from the interior, and read in Monsieur Villeneuve's library. But the tang had been taken by that flying-boat, and I mentioned departing the next day.

But my host had other views. I was paying a not too despicable board. Also if I should marry one of his daughters I might provide a little foreign travel for her. He had evidently decided that I had best stay. I invented exigencies. He invented delays.

And, by Job's comforters, it looked as if I would have to stay. There was no boat. The one emergency exit was an uncle who might be passing in a week or two with his *chaloup*. I

said that he *had* to concoct a way of escape for me. And then, of course, came that shrug. How I hate it!

And now my pacific nature began to heat from the inside.

"I am afraid I have not understood your promises of yesterday and your contradictions of to-day," I said. "Will you please *write* out why it will be necessary to wait for your uncle's boat instead of taking the mail-boat which you said would be stopping here?"

While he was concocting his reply on paper I went out and sat down in the sun. The en-goated hills were green but distasteful. The Yosemite-like cliffs seemed a prison. I resolved again never to believe any assemblage of syllables these people chose to utter. They spoke to the desire of the moment, regardless of veracity.

With a languid magnificence my host handed me this note: "Hier soir les nouvelles de l' Anse St. Jean sont [though how it came was not stated] que le bateau de ligne et que la malle ne viendra plus, mais cependant aussitot que mon oncle sera de retour ici il ira peut-être avec vous en canot sans que cela coute trop cher."

In other words I was to be held insolently captive until the uncle should decide how much ransom (in the guise of boat-fare) he would ask.

Meanwhile the mail-boat would voyage by beyond hail. I had reached my St. Helena without the satisfaction of an attempt at Waterloo.

I began to contemplate a chain of endless hours on that fly-bitten bluff looking for a boat. Horrible! Meanwhile my jailer would gloat and add up visionary dollars. But alas for his bank-account! One of his youngsters, not in the plot, came running up from the river crying,

"Le postillon, le postillon!"

"The mail-man, the mail-man!"

Like sun after rain, like firemen arriving at the fire, was that cry welcome. I saw a little boat rounding the promontory.

"How fortunate!" said my host with admirable hypocrisy. "There must have been an error."

I was too suddenly happy at the turn of things to stop and point out where the error lay. These small-fry Ananiases were only amusing, after all. Why get mad? So after I had negotiated for passage in my own person, I could laugh at the transient face of perdition into which I had looked, and say a gracious good-by. Certainly one cannot blame sensitive souls living on the fringe of barbarism for this effort to ameliorate their income at one's expense. May garlands of immortal greenbacks be looped about their necks!

Those who are voyaging with me down the

pages of this trip have doubtless long since abandoned the expectation of excessive excitement and the pleasure of seeing me surrounded by deadly dangers. I came across very few murderers, encountered almost no cannibalism, and all the fatal things that might have occurred were nipped in their incipience. But the secret of enjoyment lies in the perfecting of the moment, preferably against odds. And for the next hour after escaping from my prison valley I rode on the crest of jubilation as exultingly as if I had received an advance order for ten thousand copies of this book.

Yet the situation was charmingly simple. I was sunning myself on a twenty-foot boat, which was so oily that every time young Lavoie, its owner, lit a cigarette I was afraid that we would join the seraphim in flames. Lavoie and a youngster of twelve were the sole crew, with whom the noise of our explosive progress forbade talk. A southeast wind of some strength scourged the dark Saguenay, although an unclouded sun beat back the shadowing waves with a rain of fiery arrows. The boat heaved and labored and tore down the silvery slopes and waited till new slopes came, and I understood why we had to go upstream instead of down past the Capes.

Would I ever see those Capes? There seemed to be as many difficulties interposed between me

and the sight of them as between Ulysses and his home. Would I, years later, be still beating down the Saguenay, avoiding Cyclops who wished my ransom, Scyllas and Charybdises that coveted my purse, still hoping to lay eyes on those great cliffs, and die?

The wind drove us up Ha! Ha! Bay, a name given by those good-natured explorers who could enjoy a joke even if it were on them, the joke being that this bay was n't the way to China. At the head of Ha! Ha! Bay lies the multiple village which is named Ha! Ha! Bay, St. Alphonse, or Bagotville, as the mood strikes you.

"We will wait till the wind goes down," said Lavoie.

"When do you think?"

"Peut-être ce soir, peut-être demain," he said.

"If it goes down this evening then we will pass the Capes in the dark," I objected.

"I don't think it will go down this evening," he said.

And he was right.

Our Southern darkies can enjoy themselves where an American complains of lack of amusement; but a French-Canadian fairly sweats with excitement in situations where a darky would die of ennui. Ha! Ha! Bay was such a situation.

In two hours time I had exhausted its scenic wonders. Before a pulp company had piled its

débris along the shore and erected an outrageous mill the place must have been one of very tranquil beauty. On that noontide when the sun fell on white houses along the green shores, on barns flaring scarlet in fields that were yellow with mustard-weed, and on hills fronting in gray cliffs, there was a homely charm that spoke pathetically of pre-pulp-mill days. A great six-masted schooner swung at anchor, and the wind blew victoriously up the purple bay. All was fresh and beautiful under those windy skies; but I was eager for the Capes.

The next day the wind seemed as strong as ever. The sun shone, but with all his vehemence blown aside like an old man's beard. Lavoie and the youngster sat hour after hour in a tobacco-shop by the dock, correlating the gossip of the Saguenay with other gossip. I roamed, like a disconsolate hyena in a zoölogical garden, from shops where extinct newspapers were laid out to bazaars where curious relics of confectionery could still be bought. The hours passed without modulation of event. When I got tired of sitting in St. Alphonse my one diversion was to walk a few blocks and sit in Bagotville.

In another day or so I felt that I should be petrified. Something must be done. I hated to give in and take one of the excursion-steamers. Imagine, after my life of freedom, having to con-

fine myself to the correct collar and six meaningless minutes of stopping before the Capes! An anticlimax that I refused to perpetrate on myself! Leave that to the besotted bridal couples who lined those steamers' decks, and who could not be expected to forsake gazing into each other's eyes to glance at Eternity. No, I could not have my first sight of the Capes from an excursion-boat. Imagine being wheeled by the Grand Cañon on a "Seeing the Cañon" bus!

To while away the time I called up the hotel in Chicoutimi about letters. Providence answered the phone. "There 's a man here from Montreal looking for you, a Mr. Beauvais."

Six hours later Fred and I had made arrangements to paddle down the Saguenay by canoe.

CHAPTER XXII

EPICS IN STONE

THERE is something about a friendly personality that by its mere presence redeems the exasperations of the past. Fred was always more than acceptable; but Fred dropped from heaven into Ha! Ha! Bay was a godsend and reward of virtue—my own virtue in not cutting my throat those waiting days. As a further reward the gale dropped in the night; and on an August morning, as calm as Marcus Aurelius, we departed from St. Alphonse (or Bagotville) with a haste that must have looked indecent to the orderly natives.

After all my attendance on *chaloups* and motor-boating uncles and windstorms it was soothing to wield the paddle again, especially with Fred in the stern. The tide was running out, the slight breeze was with us, all our pent energies were concentrated upon leaving Ha! Ha! behind. By noon we had passed Le Tableau opposite St. Basile, and were in waters virgin to us both. Elemental cliffs rose on either hand, headland suc-

ceeded headland in the manner of sleeping lions, with heads on monstrous paws, and overhead a sky of wind-washed blue spoke of inexorable space. We flew over the opaque water like a man-o'-war bird, questing in silence.

It is hard to tell the facts about a place without being stupid, yet to leave half unsaid is unjust. About Chicoutimi, about Grand Baie (another name to relieve the monotony of calling my late asylum Ha! Ha!, Bagotville, or St. Alphonse all the time), about L' Anse St. Jean, and Descente des Femmes there is a lot of historic interest, and you can find it in a French chronicle, "Le Saguenay," by Arthur Buies. He gives the little gossipy facts that make history interesting such as that the ice did n't go out of Ha! Ha! until May 25 in 1838, the year when a society of twenty-one men penetrated this region *"pour exploiter la forêt et d' y faire le commerce de bois, la culture de la terre, ayant été strictement defendue par la Compagnie de la Baie d' Hudson qui regnait alors en souveraine sur ces contrées sauvages."* The unabated ardor of those early dollar-seekers does not seem to have differed much from our brisk search for cash at the present time. It is very hard to appear poetic to the just historian at any time, be you Crœsus or Carnegie. But at any rate, if you read Buies, the virtues of St. Alphonse (H. H. B.; G. B.; or B.) shine out

through the rubbish of woodpulp left upon his shores and correct the impressions given by this attenuated chronicle. I do not want to be unjust; nor yet a mere directory.

It was late in the afternoon when the continually ascending escarpments on the starboard side of the out-flowing stream, culminated in the great sight toward which my gaze had been fixed ever since I had thought of this trip—Cape Trinity and Cape Eternity. There they rose, afar off, their shadow-ward sides already sunk in purple, although the afternoon still poured its molten gold from the round crucible of the sun.

We were paddling slowly now, and near shore; for when the Saguenay tide comes in, it races up the middle in greatest strength. Being in the bow no object interposed itself between me and the ever-heightening goal. No mark of civilization was to be seen along either shore. No sail broke the fine line of the on-flowing river. No transient commotion of humanity intruded on this epic setting of the earth's great drama. And with me was, of all my friends, the very one to whom the echo of the past from those cliffs spoke in most comprehensible tones. For Fred, despite the revenge that civilization had taken on him for humoring her, a revenge expressed in starched collars and office labors and intercourse with lawyers, this Fred was still knit to the wilds by

many a savage thew. He had not spoken for an hour, and I knew that he was listening to the voices of a past millennial.

I think civilization is the most maligned of all our ideas because we confuse her two aspects: there is the civilization that gives and the civilization that takes away, the civilization of culture and that of compulsion. We think of the civilized land as the promised land, when often it is only the promising. If hell is paved with good intentions, I am sure it is walled with pretensions, the false gods of civilization which we are bade worship. To have one's life invaded and diluted by the wash of other people's fancies scarcely commends itself to him who would make himself free, that his genius might succeed in him. A fashion-plate civilization demands that one lead a water-color life. But this is liable to be painted out by the next criticism. It had hurt me to see Fred come to town and color his inborn talents to the occasion that civilization demanded. For he had been born with talents that far outstripped the common. But in this mountain setting Fred came back. We ceased paddling and let our momentum carry us into the basalt-colored shadow.

I have known great cliff-moments. Once I lay on my back in Switzerland and looked up along the gray stupendous distances of the Wetterhorn. Once the grim walls of the Hardanger Fiord rose

to heaven before me till the heart cried "Enough." Many times I have sat opposite that majesty of stone in our Indian Pass, the seldom seen Wallface of the Adirondacks, and thought that, compared with its soaring cornices, its leaning battlements, now gloomy with storm and again ghostly with moonlight, all other precipices would leave me unamazed. But when we came opposite the Bay of Eternity I knew that to those three great memories was being added a fourth.

To get that picture as we saw it, you must imagine yourself in our canoe, a tiny breathing thing encircled by a vast and breathless world. Behind, we were conscious of an amphitheater of savagery—jutting headlands, green bays, and sullen river. But what lay before absorbed all thought: Cape Trinity; then the parapets of heaven receding into a sea of gold; then a shadow-laden gulf; and last, Cape Eternity. This was great panorama.

Here nature was for once art. Here lay the structure of all musical composition: the bold statement of a theme, the wandering into by-paths of loveliness, and tragedy and the return again, made, by that wandering, clear. It is the threefold progress of a life—first the wonder, then the working out, and finally the coming to one's own.

Undoubtedly Cape Trinity, mounting from the mystery at its base, in three bold terraces clear-

cut against the north, to the very peak of wonder, was the nuclear spectacle. Again and again our eyes came back to its gray sublimity. Thence, like the rim of a far-seeing citadel, the lofty ramparts of the Laurentian range filed westward into the clear evening light. This had never been told me. The world's best adjectives had been directed at the cliff; but this even more astounding march of scarp and forest-interval had not been mentioned. Its lofty rhythm of valley, peak and valley, peak and valley, into the elevated plateaulands of the west, was the sublime sight. For sheer beauty perhaps the ravine, occupied by fir-forest and the Eternity River, claimed my affection. And then affection was changed to austerity by Cape Eternity, solid, huge, imaginably proud even in the face of the Almighty. These two vast bluffs were the dual arms of a Titan's throne. At the sight of this great wall, rising a sheer third of a mile from the dark water, the heart's elation came back and one's spirit rejoiced. It was easy to think large things before them. But it was no easier there than otherwhere totally to dis-enmesh one's self from the flesh and stand, spirit-wise, upon those peaks.

We decided to camp for the night near the mouth of the Eternity River. It was rather a stupendous site for the mere frying of eggs and washing of socks. But the Rock of Ages has got

used to being hacked at by philosophers, and spit on by the profane. We thought a little honest incense from a cook-fire would not be out of place.

Of course the Government has leased out the Eternity River; but we caught our fish just at its mouth where we presumed they were unrented. I expect to find that the balsam is Heaven's national tree. Certainly it grew a more celestial exuberance in that sacred spot than anywhere else in Canada. I do not remember that we talked much at supper.

Before dark had issued from our aërial cavern and engulfed the rest of that untoubled scene we got into the canoe again with the intention of loitering on the turning tide to get the full effect of our high habitation. As yet there was no star. There was no wind. No voice came from the unstruggling waters. The giant rock rose into the coming night, and the last glow glinted back from the glassy waters which it could not penetrate. Those waters seemed the essence of unshapen night—dark, troubled and impenetrable depths, the Lethe of the ancients come to the earth's surface with all its deadly power.

Under the eaves of Trinity one lost sight of the white statue erected by some grateful invalid to the Virgin who cured him. No place seems exempt from man's self-imposition.

Under the eaves of Trinity also, one lost sight

of the world. We sat there, hardly whispering, holding to the original rock, universal Adam's rib, amazed into silence. Twilight changed to dark. The pauseless flood stole gently by. Above, a cataract of gray fell from higher than the eye could gage. And above that stars shone like islands in an illimitable sea.

At such times, in such a place, one may light cigarettes, but the circles, that one blows, revolve around those answerless, grave topics that befit. Leaning back in the canoe it seemed as if we could hear the universe marching, making its appointed progress to the triumphal music of the gods. The stars with invisible feet, the forest with upreaching arms, the creeping river in its mysterious course, each was going its once-chosen way, with a singing heart, following the footsteps of the Eternal. It also seemed, in that half-light, as if a man need not find his way too hard if he but let himself go. I said as much to Fred who was so beset by diverse opportunities.

"A man 's been put here for something," said he, "and that 's certain. But how does he find out what for? That 's pretty uncertain."

"Well, we 've been directed to the ant. Have you ever watched one?"

"Sure. The little beggar never stops to think. Is that what you recommend?"

"Hardly. I recommend his faith in getting

Photograph by Walter Rutherford.

CAPE TRINITY.

there. He keeps going, touching this opportunity with his antennæ, and then that, until something in the aspect of the thing matches the instinct for that aspect in him, and then, even if it is over a lofty pebble or through an impenetrable clover-patch, he carries on. He has all the divine discontent of a great poet before he is sure, and all the satisfaction after. And he is certainly an example of zeal."

"Can you remember when you were an ant?" asked the Indian.

"I can't remember so many lives back as that. I can't even remember when I met you before."

"But we have known each other," he said seriously; "otherwise all this could not have happened so soon. It took lives of understanding. Don't you think?"

"That 's where my practical sagacity does n't let me think," I said. "When I was being introduced to the ways of Shakspere by a man who knew his ways, a great scholar named Francis Gummere, I was astounded to be shown how little the man who understood life so well indulged in dreaming of the past, the future. The past is undiscovered causes, the future unforseeable results, and there you are. The present is the sole concern."

"Then my ancestors who lived in the present

were right, and you Americans who live for the future are wrong."

"You are making the usual mistake of considering the extremes. Americans are not mere storers for the future, not mere misers. They spend life lavishly, and pass the impulse on. Americans make good ants."

We talked a lot more incoherent stuff, quasi-philosophy that is such a pleasant sedative, which yet sinks down and tickles some brain-cells into the wriggles, the results of which flower later. We touched on what Fred could recall of the old beliefs in Manitou, and that spirit-land which is never far away. Without knowing it our canoe carried us away from the rock-ledge out into the stream, and down. And when we had said our say, silence and the redoubtable mystery closed over us again. The only necessity seemed faith; and faith seemed easy beneath the wide sanity of those skies.

Somehow the summer's events, the extraordinary meetings, the succession of coincidences had strengthened mine. It was as if I had been able to catch, just out of the corner of my eye, Providence planning for me. Shades of Moody and Sankey! Yet so many beautiful things had happened, such huge outcomes from such scarce-chosen beginnings that anybody schooled to a little observation could hardly call it chance.

My sillinesses had seeded in due miseries, my acts of virtue flowered in such large reward that, beneath the justice of those marching skies, it seemed impossible to praise enough the Creator for the motive-power in things, and for the tracks that kept them straight. At last I could listen to that chief musician, David of the Psalms, and agree.

Only the greatest souls could have endured to be alone in that place, in which we slept, and I was thankful to have my friend with me; thankful too that he was one to whom that passion of solemn beauty was meaningful, if not easy to understand or utter. From beneath the delicate fronds of a hemlock beneath which we made our bed, and which housed us in a way from the too stark magnificence, we could look out on the huge night. Across the Saguenay the savage amphitheaters of risen shores had become one with mystery. On either hand the great portals to our bay rose beyond our ability to see, like altars to nature's God. A star or two shone through the green roof, His seal to a deed of unweariable beauty. And at our feet ran the stream and, save us ourselves, the only unsleeping thing, the age-long symbol of life. As sleep came upon me I thought again of its youthful fallow years in the basin of Lake St. John, of its first maturity of passion there in the rapids of La Grand Décharge,

of its first disillusionment at Chicoutimi. Strange parallel to all our lives; true and real, if not especially novel, figure of comparison! And, sleepier yet, I vaguely wondered what would correspond to these great Capes in my adventure, and where would my craft, sailing on the broadening, deepening stream, already brackish with experience, first taste the bitter salt and know the end. Perhaps it was because of that great granite calm, that lucid infinite peace above, that it did not disturb me: and this I remember from either a drowsy or a dreamy moment; I remember feeling sure, whatever form our immortality did take, that we should not cease sailing when we reached the sea.

CHAPTER XXIII

TADOUSAC AND THEREABOUTS

"LES sondages effectué en 1830 par le capitaine Bayfield de la marine royale d 'Angleterre ont corrigée les exaggérations qui attribuaient à la rivière Saguenay une profoundeur de quinze cent, de dix-huit cent, et même de deux mille pieds en plus d' endroit, mais la masse du public a persisté dans son erreur, qui est devenue ajourd'hui une sorte de tradition." So says Arthur Buies in "Le Saguenay."

It 's a poor lake or river that has n't some tradition of that sort, to wit: that there 's some corner of it that is miles deep, without bottom in fact, and probably connected by funnel with Avernus. Of course the statement, uttered with awe and listened to with credulity, that "they have n't found bottom yet," is about as significant as would be the remark about an invalid, "They have n't found his appendix yet." They have n't looked for it; that 's all. In either case it seems a pity to hunt, and I 'm sorry that the deepest part of the Saguenay has been found

—only 167 fathoms—and that is nowhere near the Capes, but five miles above Tadousac. But since this has been revealed, like that other unfortunate discovery that the earth is no longer safe and flat, there seems slight use in repeating the fable. Steamboat folder-writers might copy.

Then there 's another superstition that 's been rather overworked: the pretty but unveracious thought that the Saguenay is made of ink. Bayard Taylor, I think it was, in one of his introspective moments called it "the River of Death"; and since death, to our nursemaid minds, is like jumping down a sooty chimney instead of the opening of doors to a great light, all the writers who have gone into their staterooms to hunt up adjectives about the river (instead of looking at it) have tried to outvie each other in smutting up the rainbow that the river makes. "Yon ebon flood" is the favorite; "the swarthy stream" and "somber torrent" tie for second; and, one is surprised to find, "pitchy tide" is used only once. Here is what the tourist, sensitized to a state of nerves by the advertiser's pen, is told to be on the lookout for, as he nears old Trinity:

> Located midway between Chicoutimi and Tadousac, the very climax of all that is awful and awe-inspiring, rises that elevated cliff Eternity, and its sister precipice Trinity with its three elevations (hence the name) above the sinister flood. As the tourist gazes

up the unbroken steep it appears as if it might fall over and crush the steamer. The murky waters lave its base as they have for uncounted ages, their sable shade being caused by the stupendous depths of a mile and a half, indicating no ordinary channel. The steamer, proceeding for thirty miles on this same ebon flood, lands the tourist at Chicoutimi, where time will be given. . . .

It 's all there, you see; the depth, the darkness, and the distance. All the adjectives are not yet gone, however; at least no one has used chocolate-colored, Ethiopian, or nigrescent. And very few, apparently, have ever seen the river except at night. Certainly there was nothing dingy about the "awful heights," the "adamantine walls," or the "awesome depths" when dawn shone down upon Beauvais and me from the tremendous east. A splash of rose, a flood of gold, and then the stream had re-donned its normal silver. It spoke to us of the earlier earth with which its youth had been, but in tones of God's calm and tireless beauty. And the only gloom I felt was from the fact that Fred must get him back to Montreal before many more tides.

It is strange what a weight of beauty one can carry without feeling the burden. We left the Bay of Eternity that morning laden with invisible gifts. I was glad that a mutual reticence sealed our lips, and that a milder excellence of scene greeted us as we dropped down from the

stream, for an increasing wonder would have been too much.

Fred decided to wait for the noon boat at L' Anse St. Jean, and there I determined to stay a while. Barring Tadousac it is the most picturesque of all the bays on the Saguenay, its retiring cove face to face with the high mountainous interior of the Parc Laurentide. Distantly rise the great wooded range of Eternity and Trinity, and their sister elevations, until the eye is lost in the tumult of peaks and gorges. Nearer, a white church, a road, meadows, and an islet invite domestic feelings. I was now conscious of hunger, and remembering that the mail pilot, Lavoie, had told me his mother lived here, I looked her up. Like son, like mother—cheerful, able, hospitable. I was soon at home in the kitchen.

Indeed Madame Lavoie was the perfect woman, as judged by habitant standards. Having borne thirteen children she was still granted strength to care for them, her house, and her husband's work. After dressing herself and assisting a half-dozen others, she would wash the kitchen floor, arrange the breakfast-table, make a cake or so, mend the cut fingers and bind the bruised eyes of her assembling flock, prepare three-quarters of a dozen for school, serve me, and then write up her husband's freight business, since he cannot read,

after which she was ready to begin the heavy work of the day. I know all this because much of it went on whilst I was shaving by the family mirror in the kitchen.

My voyage on the excursion-steamer to Tadousac was accomplished in the bow-most chair, and divided between looking at the lessening majesty of the shore and listening to the ludicrous comment of two typical tourist ladies, honest schoolma'ams both.

"My, I 'm glad I got through dinner in time. I would n't have missed this for anything. Look, do you think that 's a beaver?" (It was a stick of cord-wood, beaver having a distaste for ocean water.)

"It may be. See, it 's moving."

"I declare it is. Julia ought to see that. Where do you suppose she is?"

"I left her at the table. That salad was good, was n't it? See that boat there. And there 's only one man in it."

"No, he can't be left alone to manage all by himself. It looks like it was going to rain too."

"Do you think we 'll have to pay for that extra meal at Chicoutimi? I asked the purser about it and he said—"

"O Caroline, see that high mountain over there!"

"It 's wonderful, is n't it?"

"No, not *there,* there 's the one I mean behind that other."

"Wonderful, wonderful. If I were you, Hattie, I 'd try that shampoo with olive-oil. It 's wonderful for the hair."

For hours they went on, and so did the boat, the difference being that it got somewhere. But they were getting their money's worth, and, bless them, would talk about the trip for years to come, and it 's appreciation after all that makes the world go round. I liked them, and wished they could have sensed the real land through which they were being touristed, I wished that they could have sat down to an old Norman bowl of confiture and cream, have listened to *Madame la Mère* tell a tale of her youth to the accompaniment of the spinning-wheel treadle, have fingered and envied the household treasures of needle and dye, have heard the men, early in from the fields, sing of times gone glimmering, but sweetly gone.

Ste. Marguerite River flows into the Saguenay between Gibraltars, below which the attractive houses of Ste. Marguerite are grouped. After passing La Boule, a sort of petrified Neptune's head raised above the water, we reached Tadousac. As an example of the magic of French names, consider the difference of sound between

L' Anse à l 'Eau and Water Bay, the place where one disembarks.

There are three things that I earnestly recommend to any one stepping out upon the wharf at Tadousac. First, get in one of the little horse-jitneys and ask the driver to take you to the pension located highest on the hill; for only in a pension do you get the view and the flavor of the place. Second, wander down to the store, where you will be served by a perfect-mannered youth, and ask him for the pamphlet on Tadousac and the Indian chapel by Dean Harris, an appreciatively written account of the place which is invaluable. And third, fix no time for your departure. Timelessness is the essence of the place. Tadousac is compounded of timelessness and beauty and that storied glamour which makes history in Canada one long romance.

If I were a Canadian writer, hunting the altar of national inspiration, I would go sit on the grannite boulder at the point where Saguenay and St. Lawrence meet. The mysterious stream upon the north bears him its wealth of romance. The great gray-glinting river from the west offers him a panorama of all the numbered ages, the time of Basque and Breton, of Jacques Cartier and Champlain. And when he has tired of the rivers, and of the black-forested point, of the blue Laurentian ranges and the white villages that

are strung like beads on the rosary of humanity, he can gaze down into the little harbor of Tadousac itself, where on the morning of May 24, 1603, Samuel de Champlain anchored *La Bonne Renommée*. The population of Tadousac numbers only a few hundred. I suspect that they resemble other people in the main, but their pastor says that with them "the laws of life are holy, the richest are poor, and the poorest live in abundance." They must learn contentment with beauty, for that they have always with them when winter deprives them of most else. Certainly I know that they are courteous and honest. They are not bowled over by the latest frivolities; indeed, they are still talking about the Glacial Age in Tadousac.

In addition to the memories of Champlain's craft there were ghosts of Montagnais war-canoes and Jesuit fishing dories and French war-galleons in the bay. And right among them rode that most graceful of all motor-driven things, a private yacht. Its lovely lines contrasted with the granite ruggedness of the harbor's rim, its white with the dark of firs. It was as if a sea-gull had settled on her dark nest and would soon fly again. I was in that midway state of mind which has not quite forgotten the world in favor of the Creator; in other words, I had not quite become a Tadousackian. The yacht somehow spoke of

Europe when I ought to be thinking of the wild men, the fur markets, the calm-faced Jesuits. The boat did not make a discordant note; it was too beautiful for that. But it was like a swallow in the late autumn that sang of spring when one must make one's bed for winter. I tried to fasten my gaze on the Indian chapel, the "oldest house of worship, framed in wood, in the Dominion of Canada," for it was built in 1747. The yacht had no antiquity about it; the oldest church-bell in Canada was n't on the yacht; the yacht had not harbored three centuries of worshiping Indians, and on it I most certainly would not find the oil-paintings and religious adornments mentioned by the venerable Marie de l' Incarnation. But nevertheless my eyes would steal from that beautiful white chapel to the beautiful white boat—and stay there.

"What nonsense, sir!" I said sternly to myself. "Get thee behind me, yacht. Consider the primordial age. Think of the earthquake of 1663. At least pay some attention to the cemetery, where the bones of the white man and the red are undistinguishable."

For some reason even the cemetery, charming as it was, did not wholly divorce my thoughts from yachts and flesh-pots, for I had had a pretty big dose of the wilds. I longed for a little of that sort of conversation that goes with yachts—

conversation interspersed with food not wholly derivative from pig.

Byron, somewhere in "Don Juan," has a good recipe for untoward thoughts. He says:

> A little cold water on the bust
> Is just the thing to banish lust—

or words of that ilk, and I judged possibly a swim might clear my mind of worldly things—and put me back a century or two where I ought to be. So I went around the granite cliff a little farther, stripped, and waded gingerly out along the seaweedy rocks and stepped into the first gray pool of spring-clear water.

Jumping shrimps! but it was cold. The Glacial Age must have been only about two days gone. I wondered how often the Jesuits bathed. They never mention it in "The Relations." And now I stood there wondering how I could get wet with the least pain, watching the current boil around the corner. I noted with relief that swimming was probably dangerous. But still one hates to seem a coward to one's self. I took another step seaward. My legs were already numb, were already congealing into their final crystals—crystals that might look beautiful under the magnifying-glass, but which felt out of place while the upper half of me was still alive. I hunted a place where I could dive without testing the orig-

inal granite with my head. And dove. And came up with a snort. But, by those shrimps again, it was n't *my* snort. The noise, a horrible wheezing sort of explosion, came from a dozen yards away, and I saw a long moving arc of leather-colored sea-serpent playfully blow the spume from its nose. It gave another tempestuous sneeze and disappeared. It disappeared with a fearful flirt of a forked tail that waved plainly au revoir and not farewell. I scrambled out of the St. Lawrence, chilled not only to the bone but way beyond. Possibly it may only have been a grampus; but certainly the cost of ridding my thoughts of yachts was too high. Besides it occurred to me that on the yacht were probably dry towels. I sunned myself back to circulation and walked back to my pension, hungry for company. The wondrous calm of the place, the reposeful beauty, the companionship of the dead, all these left me cold, though not as cold as the sea-serpent.

"Good Lord!" I said to myself, "now that you 've reached the pinnacle of things, appreciate it."

But appreciation never came that way. I drowsed off that night out of key with 1600. Since then I have learned to accept real hunches; for they are only Providence tugging at one's hand.

CHAPTER XXIV

LE PÈRE DU SAGUENAY

YES, sirs, it pays to follow up one's hunches, when convinced that they are not mere mirages of the liver.

The next day was a sultry Sabbath. Forest-fires back in the mountains filled the sky with haze. I was talking on the gallery with the *pensionaire* about them, and that topic led to forests, and they to *Le Père du Saguenay,* a William Price whose lumber industry had been the means of colonizing the region of the Saguenay. What little I was able to learn seemed as romantic to me as any tales of the voyageurs, and when I asked where I could get the rest of the story the old man said, "Why don 't you ask Sir William? He lives down there," and pointed out the house.

Anybody with an uncalloused social sense balks, I should suppose, at chasing titles. But I am bolder in my flannel shirt and army shoes than usual, and there was something desperate about the stifling inertia of the day, something impelling in the fact that five minutes away was the

Photograph by Walter Rutherford

grandson of the Saguenay. I rang up the house. He was at home.

"Certainly," in the most hospitable voice possible, "I am just going down to my yacht. Can you meet me there in half an hour?" Oh, Providence!

The hand-shake with the well set-up, fine-looking man on the sunny dock inaugurated for me an era of enjoyment and set a record in liberality hard to beat. The pleasures of a yacht, the privileges of an aëroplane, and the hospitality of a gentleman's home—and these to a perfect stranger—were a mark of large-heartedness, surely. But what touched me most was that Sir William Price should recognize some use to the region in my errand, and assume with private generosity a few of the amenities which the Provincial Government had declined to consider. Of course this incident, in my individual case, is merely a microscopic illustration of the reason why lavish England is an empire of the world, while frugal France still sits by the family hearth, where the hoarded sous are buried. "Bread upon the waters" finds no place in French practices. In Sir William I had come upon a man who could look beyond his hand.

"The first William Price," said his grandson, "came out to Canada in 1810 from Hertfordshire. Napoleon had established the Continental

Blockade. Access to the Scandinavian countries was interdicted. So England sent my grandfather, who was only twenty-one, as her representative to see about purchasing masts for the Admiralty.

"Quebec seemed to the young man so rich in opportunity that, after some experiments on the Ottawa, he moved to Chicoutimi in 1830 and began what was to be his actual life-work. He was a tall, thin, spare man well adapted to a thin, spare country, and he thought more of the country than he did of himself. He was a great walker, (in fact he had walked to Halifax in the War of 1812), and with his dog-team bound the isolated camps on the Saguenay together by his winter visits. His idea was to colonize.

"He established industrial concerns at about thirty places, including Tadousac, Baie des Rochers, Rivière Noire, Petit Saguenay, L' Anse St. Jean, L' Anse à Pelletier, Grand Baie, Chicoutimi, Rivière de Moulin, married, had fourteen children, and died in 1867 in Quebec, aged seventy-eight, a real pioneer, 'surrounded by his children' as the papers say, and enjoying the respect of his fellow-citizens."

A detailed biography of the first Mr. Price would be really a hand-book on how to colonize. From the beginning progress has seemed to follow the Prices, and prosperity with it, and as

neither of these comes without the exercise of gray matter and red muscle, the story of that young man's single-handed manipulation of the wild bush into colonies is veritably thrilling. He fought famine, fought discouragement, fought the Hudson's Bay Co., fought the climate and distance and lack of precedent. On his side was ranged the English tradition of success honestly brought about. His extra-personal assets were an untapped timber-wealth, and a corps of habitant workers who had faith in his foresight and integrity. The rest was time's affair.

It is very easy to slight the achievements of the past. The modern man, with all the equipment of civilization at his hand, is usually content to have reared a family of two or three, and is overjoyed if they turn out well. If in addition he has a country house and has planted a few acres in vegetables and orchards and can take his case among them on Saturday afternoons, he is among a blest minority. At his death he is lamented, even by the servants who have to seek other situations.

Consider then the prowess of this man Price, England's representative at twenty-three, who added a territory as large as France to Canada's domain, and whose genius for organization peopled it with the prosperous habitant. Consider what powerful qualities he must have had to keep

these beneficiaries in a state of gratitude—beneficiaries, what is more, both of another race and another religion than his own. Many a time the seeds advanced to the farmers, the loans granted, the judicial niceties exercised, maintained the man's province where in similar situations to-day all the pother of parliaments can scarcely do as well. In short, William Price performed a task which the Government of to-day finds quite worthy and demanding of its united efforts, and performed it well. No wonder he is called *Le Père du Saguenay.* The House of Price is carrying on the tradition.

It was late before we climbed the hill and I was presented to Lady Price and the sons on whom the mantle of management will sometime fall. Life is energized by contrasts, and it was immensely stimulating to have fallen from my French solitudes into the fun and sociability of an English tea-party. It recalled happy, happy days in England where the talk runs round the world, and what you are instead of what you wear determines your degree of interest for the others. Lady Price made one feel that flannel shirts were the especial mode for Sunday afternoon, and as I listened to the banter and anecdotes of people and the war and England, I had all the exhilaration of going from the closed room of myself into the crisp outdoors of others'

gaiety. Lady Price told one anecdote of the democratic habitant Napoleon, who had guided King Edward up the Bersimis when, as Prince of Wales, he had come out to Canada. Old Napoleon was chosen to guide the late King's brother, the Duke of Connaught, up the same stream. The guide was full of the old times and when he was presented to the Duke, clapped him on the shoulder and said, "J' ai bien connu ton frère."

A charming Mrs. Powell helped pour tea, and it was Miss Powell who got me into a lucky fix. Sir William was standing by when she said, "Are you coming up with us on the yacht to-night?" I had n't been invited. I hated to plunge myself into loneliness by saying "No." I ask you, what would you have said?

. . . . . .

Eight bells and the darkness of the Styx; for sound only the cutting of the water by the white prow. We are aproaching the Capes. The talk has been with the girls on deck and then with the host below, while the spiny nectar of Edinburgh ebbs in the glasses. At length they turn in, for they 've seen these river reaches many times. But I have n't, and after the stirless heat of the afternoon it is good to walk the deck and feel the chill breath of mid-Saguenay. I talk with the captain about fogs and his navigational past. The sky is measurelessly thick with quiet, the dis-

tance with dark. The water might be velvet. And now they rise, august Eternity, majestic Trinity—not as sights, but as feelings, being but soft-edged clouds of stone that have settled at the portals of the oracle. They bide their time. They will see wonders yet.

. . . . . .

The next day the sun rose hot, and, about six hours later, so did we. If you are at Chicoutimi in summer don't begrudge it its heat. The town that sits in a draft from the North Pole most of the year needs a week or so of conventional August weather. But anybody expecting to emulate Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace number can go to Chicoutimi for training. The difference is unnoticeable.

Of all the family of Price, I should imagine that Major Jack would have most cause to remember that muggy Monday. For he conducted a cousin from England and myself over the pulp-mills at Jonquière, and while I could forget my mopped brow in the novelty of things, the labyrinth of steaming rooms was less than novel to the Major by some months' work therein. He had learned the business by the only possible method, and we ignorami had the results of his grasp of the processes handed to us in a way graphic enough to make me realize that the turning of forests into newspapers is one long drama.

Nothing impresses my unmechanical wits like machinery. Unfortunately, comprehension ceases when the processes become more involved than those of, say coffee-grinders or safety-razors. But the impressiveness remains. I humbly abase myself before the genius who gave birth to the adding-machine. I feel like the lady recently from Ireland, who, on being shown a thermometer and having its uncanniness explained, exclaimed, "What won 't they being doing next!" So imagine the effect on me of acres upon acres of machinery mobilized to turn wood into material for words. Outside was a river floating down a perpetual stream of logs. These, sawn, sorted, chewed, squeezed, chemicalized, squashed, dried, whitened, and rolled, issued in heavy bales of news-print ready to be freighted off. The pseudo-human ability of the forest of cogs and rollers whence issued the perfected product was simply incredible, though the major said it was incredibly simple. Sometimes I wish they would take the final step, and get the same machine to write the editorials.

At Chicoutimi I was introduced to the flying department of the Price Brothers' firm and a dilemma in conjunction. "Would you like to drop down the river on the *Albecore* with us," said Sir William, "or prefer to fly over some of the limits?" In other words would I have some

more fun or further my investigations—disport or duty? It is not so often that I have had to choose between heaven-hunting on a flying-boat, and a house-party on a yacht, that I do the thing easily. Sometimes it is a nuisance having obligations to one's self.

. . . . . .

And now Patience descended from her monument and sat before me as a necessary model; for no sooner had Sir William left me mourning my iron will in Chicoutimi than the fires ascended and the smoke came. On all sides yellow eruptions from miles of burning bush thickened the atmosphere and fenced out the wind. The sun's rays struggled through and squatted on the sizzling earth exhausted. The aëroplane was busy reporting new fires to the fighters and conveying the chief from place to place. Monsieur Guay was away. I was ashamed to go, to knuckle down to fate in that fashion. So I hunted up the resources of Chicoutimi, and came across Philip Angers.

In Angers I found the French-Canadian of the city at his best—a young fellow suffering neither from moneyitis, that wretched disease of materialism which attacks the habitant when he moves into town, nor yet from the sleeping-sickness, that disease of the country-dweller which slowly turns him into a stump. Philip read, thought, acted,

and retained the best instincts of the old hospitality. It was he who told me about the Indians of Ste. Anne on the high bluff across the river.

My heartfelt advice to anybody having two hours in summer-struck Chicoutimi is to spend an hour and fifty minutes of it somewhere else. The Queen of the Saguenay is more dazzling from afar. From the high cliffs of Ste. Anne she is radiant; and while looking at her spires and smokestacks one has the additional advantage of conversing with veritable *chasseurs Montagnais*. If you desire to be guided back to catch (sight of) the caribou which roam in meditative herds anywhere from thirty to three hundred miles away (depending of whom you are inquiring) ask for Paul Niatipi or Joseph Regis. If you don't talk Montagnais, take a French dictionary along, for these gentlemen know several languages, but none of them is English. The high street of Ste. Anne which leads up to the bluff that overlooks a goodly section of the adjacent world is one of the most repaying climbs I know.

One morning the wind turned, blew from the unburnable sea, and drove back the wall of smoke. Captain Quigley, whose courtesy had stood up bravely beneath my interrogations for the past weeks, telephoned that we should fly at nine. The news was more stimulating than sudden fortune —than sudden fortune probably is (this is one of

those imaginative similes). At any rate the news that one is going to perch on clouds and stroll arm-in-arm with lightning—such news is stimulating. Nearly everybody likes to get down the altas and pore over a map; so imagine what fun it is to flow over one. With the additional advantage of having all the countries life-size and correctly tinted.

For days I had been toying with the pleasant problem of deciding where to go: whether to fly over Cape Eternity and squelch its towering insolence forever, or to take a turn about the park and count the animals as advertised in the Government prospectuses; or should I jump the horizon on the northeast, that range of the Shipshaw Mountains which had so long shut in my vision, and come, as the map predicted, into a vast no-man's land of lakes, strange rivers, and endless hills? When the time came there was no decision. Out we ran on the river, faster, took off, skimmed the surface, rose along the cliffs of Ste. Anne, looked down into her tree-tops, climbed, and on emerging from the town's personal atmosphere found ourselves swimming in a sea of mother-of-pearl. Smoke, mist, fog, cumulus cloud, forest-green, lake-blue, Saguenay gray, and mountain distance—all were lit by a shy sun and changed by our great speed into a weaving scene of fairy opalescence. Obviously the smoke over the in-

terior barred sightseeing there. So we turned once more to the Capes and Tadousac.

Canada is far ahead of the United States—in emptiness. And much of it is still unscorched. We climbed and climbed, passed the six thousand foot level and emerged from all the smoke. It was very cosy in the craft. Instead of being carried as before in the prow, like an olive in the dove's returning beak, I had a small room in the middle to myself. There was space for a library; but there have been written very few books suitable for aëroplane reading. Most books have the earth-savor too strong. Flight shows up the pettiness of our divorce fiction, our crawling realisms; and our romances of the tea-table all imply roofs. On the other hand the wide-sea tales, the big science that includes the stars, the philosophers that stand on science—these could be included. But great poetry is the thing. Poets begin where planes must stop; and that satisfies, that alone satisfies.

It was all probably very dull for Captain Quigley. That is the most disconcerting thing to me about aviation; the pilots sicken of ambrosia. But he certainly did the skies in my behalf. We had risen until the whole Saguenay lay visible at one glance beneath us. To the northeast the country rose in terraces toward Labrador, the Shipshaws holding smoke in their green folds,

while the mountains looked like potato-parings fallen on the green apron of Mother Earth. A vast burn suggested the Grand Cañon of the Colorado, its reds and browns taking on castellated shapes in the distance. Parallel to the Saguenay ran the greener cañon of the Ste. Marguerite a region of majesty and beauty. On the southwest lay the great irregular group of rangy plateau that was the Laurentide Park. North, the farmed country which we had left spread its mild domestic colors. The St. Lawrence made a python of faint pearl across the southern world.

I am glad that few people see the great Capes from above. There was small greatness remaining. Eternity looked like an otter-slide, Trinity the up-throwings of a mole. But the map of which they formed the pole was still undiminishingly splendid. I traced the Eternity River back to the slim lake that gives it birth, and saw innumerable places of beauty on it. I saw a little lake, set like a turquoise jewel in Eternity's crown of forest. In fact I saw hundreds of lakes whose living loveliness was never dreamt of by the mere inhabitants of earth. Opposite St. Basile there was a huge body of water perched along the rim of the palisade but never set down on the map. This finding of an infinity of new waters is one of the glorious sensations of flight. To be able to drop into domains never broached by man—that is

a superlative delight of the imagination, whether the actuality is ever to take place or not.

Endlessness, wildness, strangeness, beauty, and again endlessness—that is Canada. Through the hole in the plane's floor I saw sharply focused the haunts of beaver and moose, the pools where salmon must be, and virgin lakes of trout, and the grassy edges of places where ducks were eating the wild rice. And then I would gaze beyond the ranges and realize that this went on to the Pole, with ever the presence of life, ever the absence of men. The thought made one as buoyant as light. Here was perpetual sanctuary from the pressure of things, here the inviolable frontier. Here were beauty and strangeness and an endless wilderness —Canada's gift to a hiving race.

CHAPTER XXV

MOISAN THE TRAPPER

SO stole the weeks away. Summer's green robe slipped from the stained and shining arms of autumn, and I awoke to find that the season of flies had vanished, and the smoldering seas of purple fireweed were blanched and gone. A cool wind bore down on wings of silver-blue from the North and advised me that if I wanted to complete my trip I had better forsake my habitant pastures and hie me to the source of the St. Maurice before it froze.

As far as completing the trip went I had given that up. There was no such possibility. No man can ever see all Laurentian Land and wrap it up in the pages of a book. The best I could hope to do was to speak of the little I had seen, in as nearly a suggestive way as the wind in the firs speaks of further north, and let who had ears listen. But the River St. Maurice was an obvious necessity to even a partial completeness. To reach it I had to change cars at Rivière à Pierre.

The desire of our lives is undeniably to enjoy

living. And when I first saw Rivière à Pierre I did n't see how this could be done there. The station, the modest inn, the unobtrusive cottages, the naked old nunnery looked to my travel-sated eyes about as enticing as a rusty rat-trap. I had no desire to read, it was drizzling, and they told me that the train to La Tuque would not be along for three hours or so. To make me more impatient was the fact that on that train were Sally-gay and Alice-from-Wonderland, and possibly Fred who was going to show the three of us a domain or two. Anybody having the chance to refresh himself with one look at either Sally-gay or Alice, to say nothing of both together, and having that chance postponed for three hours by an inconsiderate railroad, is bound to develop a fierce irritation. In addition I had not had any meals or intermediate light refreshments for some while; I was in no humor to appreciate what might have been heroic, if not handsome, in the past of Rivière à Pierre. I sat ferociously on the very hard-wood bench for a while, and then started to stride up and down the platform with equal ferocity.

I had done about three rounds when I passed a young fellow loitering along communing with his pipe. Something in his appearance arrested even my self-pitying mood. The next time I passed I saw what it was, a singularly engaging candor of

countenance, and a singularly handsome suit of clothes. The third time I stopped.

The suit must have cost a lot in London, being one of those soft blue cloths, the sort in which Antony would have chosen to woo Cleopatra had they been living on the Thames. But my lad had grown impatient with the rest of the gentle habiliments that go with suits. He wore no collar, his shirt was open far enough to show a stevedore chest, his shoes—but it all seemed to enhance his naïve beauty: the superb head, fine color, steady eyes of deepest brown. One knew that this youth represented healthy, resourceful manhood before a word need be said.

The easiest way to begin a conversation with a French-Canadian is to refer to cigarettes; the second is the lumber situation; the weather comes in a delayed third. By the time we had reached the weather Moisan and I were old friends, striding up and down the drizzly planks together. His quiet voice matched the assurance with which he seemed accustomed to meet life.

"Have you been to London?" suggested meddlesome *moi*, still wondering about that suit.

"Ah, non."

"But that," I continued, touching the coat, "that comes from London."

"Je l' ai acheté à Montréal."

"You are a whisky-runner, then," I said. All

Photograph by Père Courtois.

THE INDIAN CHAPEL, TADOUSAC, 1747

French-Canadians like to be thought capable of daring.

"Ah, non, Monsieur," and he laughed; "furs were high last year."

"You take them yourself?"

He nodded.

"Near here?"

"Très loin, à Abitibi."

"Who helps you?"

"Je vais seul, Monsieur." He was started, and began to talk.

I wish I could convey the interest he aroused. Here was a young fellow, not over twenty-one, self-possessed as Apollo and near as handsome, telling me in the calmest possible manner that his life, eight or nine months of it at least, was spent in the wildest sort of wilds, following the oldest industry, alone.

"In which barn will we find the best tea?" said I, hoping for real talk. He disavowed responsibility for the bareness of the houses with a wave of the hand and said, "Ste. Thecle is my home; we should be there." But we found a cozy room, garnished with the usual praiseworthy framed mottoes, and gilt-burdened glass, and imbibed tea, while I listened to the modest observations on life by a youth who was surviving it by virtue of his own wits.

"I trapped the first year with my father," he

said, "and learned. It was not hard. I go up on the Transcontinental next week. It is late now; but my father wished to go to New York and I wished not to leave before he has returned. I and my two dogs go in by canoe, for days and days, with new traps and ammunition and flour. I have a cabin about ninety miles from the railway, and there I have great comfort. I run trap-lines in several directions and have little shelters in two other spots. I go twenty-thirty miles a day sometimes. It is to my taste more than city life."

"Are you never lonely?" I asked.

"Ah, non" was a real assurance; "there is no time. When I am on the line I am thinking of what will be in my next trap, or how I am going to catch that fox who is shy or that fisher who got away. And when I am in my cabin I cook my meals and smoke and think what I will do the next day, and the next summer. And I sleep. It is a good life. I have no worries; I know about the future; I am happy."

This looks prosaic in print; to me it said much. The boy was already a philosopher at the age when most fellows are wondering what in thunder they had better start thinking about doing. He could give reasons for his happiness and rules for its continuation. Yet it was not mere milk-soft contentment. To face blizzards and the possibility of wolves, to compete with Indians

on their own territory and at their own game, to face the chance of accident with fortitude—this is not being soft. Nor did he lack the divine fire. He told me that he had found the girl for him and would be married next summer. He appreciated cities, and liked Montreal because it was full of parks and people. He was interested a little in affairs, and had sent his father down to see Carpentier fight. He had earned more than three thousand dollars the winter of high prices. This boy had actually wrested from the silent places more hard cash than most self-esteeming schoolteachers receive at the climax of their careers. "It is a good life," he had said, and I was beginning to see why; to see also how boy trappers could wear London serge.

Moisan did not have a sentimental regard for the Indian. "It is better to walk on the trail *behind,*" he had said with a gleam in his brown eyes that recalled an incident. "They are jealous of their women," he added; "one dare not so much as look at them. Jealous, but capable. Yes, they are very capable, but dirty. They do not bother to cook bread either. They eat only meat."

I asked him what he had to eat.

"I do not starve myself," he said, the tea already tinging his poise with a little gaiety. "Do I look as though I starved myself? I have

partridges with my bread, and moose-steak is better than beef, while beaver goes better than chicken. Fish? No, in winter fish is good only for the baiting of traps."

"What skins do you take?" I asked. "Tell me in the order of their value."

"First, black fox. He is the most of value. I have to pay a royalty to the Government of fifteen dollars for every black fox I take. Then silver fox, and a friend of theirs, the blue, and the cross fox and sometimes the red, though the white is common too in the North. The otter and the beaver are next, and the same value about, with the fisher perhaps. Less valuable than the fisher are the marten, wolf, and wolverine. You have heard of carcajou, Monsieur? I do not want him about, even for the pleasure of catching him. As for bear and deer and moose and caribou, I do not need to get more than one a winter. Then comes lynx and skunk and mink and ermine. Then in the last lot comes muskrat and squirrel and rabbit and weasel. I do not trap mice," he added showing his fine teeth. I think that nothing impresses one so much as teeth in Quebec, where dentists have never ventured and the toothbrush is at rest.

We talked freely now across our international tea-table, and I gained new admiration for the French-Canadian the while. The generation of

François Tremblay, Philip Angers, Oscar Moisan will carry far. Who can say that the world is not progressing? I pictured Moisan and myself in our cave-man days; he making a rude snare of whale-gut at the door of his ocean-facing cave, myself drawing journalistic figures on the lintel. To-day Moisan still made snares, I still wrote of my contemporaries, but both had gained in art, both were living in touch with nations instead of families merely, both constantly enlarging the storehouse of our sympathies. Progress, it seems to me, is merely a finer art of living, a constant growth of genial understanding. When we have got enough self-control to greet Mars without instantly desiring to depopulate it, I don't doubt that the way will open up. Interracial concord may follow international peace, and after that is time enough for interplanetary relations. Meanwhile it is something for the individual to have established a life of progressive harmony for himself, as had Moisan. It is noteworthy that he had achieved it by a grouping of the fundamentals.

While we talked the time had run like water. For three hours I had lived in the great fur country, he had visited town; and both had explored the fringes of new personality. I had met the kind of man who masters life, he the kind who thinks about it, and the meeting had been fruit-

ful. I had got off the train in a prodigious sulk. I was to climb on the next elated as one can only be who has had a rounded, wholesome, new adventure, such as in a rare moon *le bon Dieu* will drop into your empty hours if you will but open them. After these pages are out of print my good wishes will still follow Moisan the trapper.

CHAPTER XXVI

ODYSSEY OF THE ST. MAURICE

Prologue

TO understand why the rest of my trip, a sequence of minor casualties, a comedy of errors interpolated with worse, was more refreshing and memorable than all my previous pilgrimage put together, you must be introduced to Sally-gay and Alice-from-Wonderland, the spinster and matron whom I had inveigled into sharing the contemplated adventures of the St. Maurice with me.

"Verity is nudity," says de Musset, which accounts for the reason why Sally-gay has never told me her age. She has n't wanted to be nude about it. But I have seen her take hills on skis which could only be contemplated by youth; and at the foot of them utter wisdom gained by experience alone. You may guess her age from the average of that; but bear in mind this: She survived our trip, itself a mark of elasticity and strength; and what is more, survived it smiling,

a mark of deathless good spirits. Indeed Sally-gay was sprinkled at birth from the fount of effervescent youth. An hour with her would destroy a pessimist's pride in his own melancholy. An extra hour might convey to him some reasons for optimism, for she has studied the philosophers and tracked the liars of them to their lairs. But let him keep a continent mind, for Sally-gay is dispassionately strong, a gentlewomanly Minerva, a wonderful pal.

"Women who have not fine teeth laugh only with their eyes," proceeds de Musset. Alice-from-Wonderland laughs all over, being beautiful. The Wonderland that produced her could be only that modern one of wealth, travel, and the society that dresses itself in the fabric of cosmopolitan experience, knowing an ambassador here, an explorer there. But from this background Alice's identity stands out by reason of her delight in things, her ardor for the woods, her utter fearlessness. It is the rare woman who is sister to a dryad, the still rarer débutante. Alice met her knight and married years ago; he was luckier than Lancelot.

Such two as these had made my impatience for the train quite reasonable. I gripped Moisan's hand for good-by, lifted my faithful duffle-bag up the steps, and bounded into the train. There they were!

Canto 1: La Tuque

They were there. I knew this because a mound of baggage obstructed all view of the passengers. A ridge of duffle-bags ended in a lofty promontory of bundles, from which a stream of lesser articles flowed to the floor. At the forward jerk of the train a new landslide began. Climbing around this I came upon them.

"You see," said Sally-gay, "we succeeded in coming light."

"Yes," said I, tragically, "I see."

"Really," added Alice, "we left a lot at the Ritz. *Examinez-vous* for yourself."

They had indeed done well, having confined themselves to a blanket apiece, the minimum of personalia, the only impersonal luxury being some sanitary Swiss bread of Sally-gay's, guaranteed not to soak up the saliva. When they will have invented a bread that preserves one's life and temper at the same time, I shall consider it an advance. Both women were dressed in the only possible mountaineering costume.

"They did n't stare much at the Ritz as we scuttled out," said Alice, "but at the Junction they beat spiders for eyes! I like your habitant, though, he 's such a fearfully honest man."

"Where 's Fred?" I asked.

"Unable to get off for a week yet," said Sally-

gay. "We left him talking to a lawyer with a beard that would have gone a long way toward renovating a hair mattress. Anybody with a beard like that——"

"——Doubtless goes to a vacuum-cleaner's instead of the barber," ventured Alice.

"La Tuque!" added the conductor.

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The considerate traveler will arrive in La Tuque at night. He will do this so that on seeing the distant lights of the Hotel Windsor shining from the gloom, he can exclaim, "What a cozy town!" If he can manage to depart before dawn, the impression will not have been utterly destroyed. The train schedule, barring wrecks, not only permits of this, but exacts it, and it is this missing seeing La Tuque that has made it famous.

La Tuque is one of those large areas of industrial Canada which has ceased to be nature's and is not yet man's. I do not wonder that the La Tuquians are proud of their virgin city, for in it are growing 6500 people where none grew before, and all this in the last few years. The inhabitants are housed, schooled, churched, and hoteled. They have the privilege of wandering around streets as broad as Petrograd's, and nature-lovers can observe larger dogs there than have ever been seen. These dogs furnish another

reason for arriving at night, for then they cannot observe you well. They are used in winter for hauling things through the bush. In summer, however, they operate in La Tuque, principally on the Rue Commerciale. It is fortunate that they do not yield to their atavistic instincts, or occasionally there would be a child the fewer. The reason for La Tuque is the Brown Corporation, a huge and skilfully conducted pulp concern.

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The ladies had left Montreal with the temperature at eighty-five. They woke to find it thirty-eight. The rain was sluicing down. October was coming in—by the gallon. We drank the cold, gray coffee of the morning after and transported our effects to the station, where most of the population was collected discussing the wreck in avid French.

"When does the next train leave for Montdeschingue?"

"Day after to-morrow, *peut-être,* Monsieur."

"*What?*"

"There has been a wreck. It will take two days, or perhaps longer."

Two days in La Tuque! Like a cycle of Cathay—in the cellar! Alice had said laughingly the evening before that she had felt an incident coming, felt it in her bones. We turned anxiously to her to learn whether her bones' prophetic mar-

row was propitiated by this, or was there more to come? She thought this would suffice. Indeed it would seem so—two days in La Tuque! We walked meditatively hotelward through the mud.

And now the mettle of my companions began to show. The temperament of neither was to be tamed by disaster, and the more their golden spirits were rubbed by misadventure the more they shone. The manager of the Hotel Windsor, seeing us return, must have suspected, either that our reason was sleeping or else that we had heard news so good as to be a little overpowering. Certainly from the way the girls laughed you might suppose that they were disappearing down the quicksands of sanity. Alice laughs all over, as I said, and at the apex of a spasm Sally-gay usually, I hesitate to mention, snorts. This provides incentive for another round.

"If Joe could only see me now!" said Alice. I was glad he could n't A hotel lobby, a hillock of duffle in the middle of the floor, a French-Canadian attendant whose most helpful gesture was the national shrug; for view a street into which it was still raining; and for vista two days of uncomfortable inaction, and more *peut-être*. What husband would n't have taken his wife by the hand and said, "Let 's go home."

But delicate woman is more stanchly built. We were beginning to recollect our Marcus Aurelius,

when a young fellow I had met once before passed the window. I leaped from the astonished ladies and dashed out the door and after him.

Canto 2: Wayagamack

"Eddie! Hello! Eddie Beauvais, Attendez un moment!"

By this time whenever a member of the Beauvais family sees me he knows that he is about to assist me out of some predicament. It has happened so often that the habit is established. Eddie, it appeared, had come in from the Wayagamack Fish and Game Club, a child of Dr. Drummond's fishing exuberance, where Eddie's father and mother had been managers for many a day. Fred had told me about it, of course, but I had not realized that it was so near La Tuque.

"You 'd better bring the ladies out to the club," said Eddie.

"But the Hudson's Bay Factor at Sanmaur is expecting us."

"I 'll 'tend to that," said Eddie; "I 'll get a larger speeder and be ready to take you in forty minutes out to Wayagamack, if you like."

We liked.

In the North Country nowadays if you don't care to bring your moose-meat out of the bush by aëroplane you fetch it on the nearest railroad track by speeder, an instrument by Bessemer out

of Ariel. If Emerson could call travel, as travel was in his day, a fool's paradise, I should like to have his verdict on speedering. A speeder is like the cow-catcher without the engine. You sit on a cushion in front of the very slight works, are trundled along the rails at an immense speed, which is noticeable in every joint, and are flung into the scenery ahead faster than you can take it in. Those who mount upon a speeder are known as sports; those who dismount, survivors. But, for exhilaration, speedering runs close to flying and shooting rapids, and our first rush out to the club was such a grateful contrast to sitting in that hotel lobby that we 'll all remember it, unflaggingly, forever.

The rain held up, momentarily, as we reached the club. Luckily I had recollected a member whom I had met, and so we did not have to fracture the rules of the place in being taken in. Mrs. Beauvais's lunch was of the utmost interest to us. Dr. Springle, the president, Dr. Hackett, and Mr. and Mrs. Plumb hospitably formed an involuntary reception committee around the beautiful fireplace. And then thoughtful Eddie appeared with "What would you like to do this afternoon?" We begged for more speedering, and were advised to see Little Wayagamack. Reports that a moose had just been seen crossing the track decided us, and we were thus launched on an after-

noon of intense pleasure. Railroading as the Government does it affords a rich diet of disappointment; as Eddie Beauvais does it, a delight to all the senses.

The Wayagamack territory—350 square miles of lake and mountain—was chosen by the poet Drummond and helped into clubdom by Commodore Parker of the Laurentian Club some thirty-five years ago. Thanks to a careful guardianship, fires have not ruined the mountains, nor unsightly buildings the lakes; and on that afternoon of autumn the restfulness and beauty of everything sank deep. As our road climbed it curved, and where we had seen hillsides of glowing maple we now saw the level of blue waters. The clouds had been raked into windrows of ultramarine by a north wind, and through the in-between fell startling shafts of sun. Where these played upon the wet woods, yellows and crimsons smote the eye in blocks of freshly vivid color. Once when we tore down a grade, with a marvelous picture of reds and orange spread before us, and then were switched around the corner, Alice exclaimed, "Mercy! I thought we were going to bump into the canvas!"

We saw no moose, but examined the tracks in the sand. We found the partridges so tame that they would not explode when you reached them, but merely take a step to the right or left as oc-

casion demanded, and then cluck in one's face. I began to believe Matamek's tale of catching them with a wire-noose on a stick. But it was more difficult to believe Eddie's about his brother Arthur's prowess in tracking moose. "It 's just practice," said Eddie calmly; "he does n't look just down on the ground. He looks ahead, sees where a bush has been bent, a piece of moss torn, on a fern crushed. That 's his business, like making up stories is yours. It 's only practice."

When we got back to the moose track across the rails I tried to visualize myself following that unseen line through the apparently undisturbed thicket. A chippie sparrow could hardly have left less trace. I decided to stick to my plots and leave Arthur his. But I 'll acknowledge that the Sherlock Holmes of the woods lives the best of all detective stories.

Possibly the most dramatically beautiful little incident I have ever seen occurred while we were still racing toward Wayagamack. One of those intensely vivid splashes of sunlight fell from the purple sky and warmed our path with its sudden glory. We rode with it in a sort of celestial spotlight, with the dripping colors of the darker landscape outside. Suddenly a cluster of bluebirds sprang from nowhere and slipped through the brightness before us, curvetting, shining like shards of living porcelain, swift as joy. For one

long gleaming moment they wove strands of color before our eyes, and it seemed as if we too were flying. We held our breath while the ecstasy lasted. Its ending was the best. Ahead of us lay a group of quivering aspens, burned to an even yellow by the frost, and now turned to bright canary by the sun. With one last sword-like flash of blue the birds dove into this cave of flame and were swallowed up, as the sound of hunting horns is swallowed by a wood.

By the law of luck we were bound to run into the third piece of good fortune, following Eddie and the bluebirds. It happened to be John Allen, veteran guide, who had put the poet Drummond wise to the riches of Wayagamack. We had a literary half-hour right on the spot.

"Yas, I knew him thirty years, a real man that."

"What kind of a real man?" asked Sally-gay, to whom most men are real.

"He liked dogs, ma'am. Terriers, Irish terriers. Whenever he 'd want something out of a man he 'd promise him a pup. But that pup 'd have to be just right or he could n't let him go. Yas, the doctor liked things just right."

"Which did he like better, doctoring or fishing?" asked Alice the teaser.

John Allen was stumped and laughed. "That 's the first time ever I was put that question, just in

that way," he said seriously. "I don't think it mattered, ma'am. Both was of prime importance when he was doing of it. To the doctor fishing was serious, and so I reckon was the dosing. But when he *talked,* it was about the fishing."

"Did he ever talk about his poetry?"

"Not he," said John Allen, quick to defend his friend. "Sometimes he 'd go upstairs in the old club-house, and stay a while and come out with a poem. I remember the night before he left for good him coming down and saying, 'Do you like this, John?' and it was that one beginning 'Again o'er dark Wayagamack in bark canoe we 'll glide.' But it was n't usual for him to mention it."

One liked John Allen as one likes the rough, gray trunk of a sugar-maple; a strong, genuine, memory-sweetened man; and so we continued to draw him out. "Tell us more about him," urged Sally-gay, "please."

"Well, I don't know as telling does much good. You had to see him, a big man, a big, bluff man, who could double up a crowd with his stories and then make them see through tears by the turn of an anecdote. All he wanted was to see others enjoying themselves. He could put pain out of countenance by just walking into the room, and lots of times he would n't take the money for just the doing of that. Everybody lost a friend, I reckon, when he went. It was as he said of 'Ole

Docteur Fiset', 'Doin' good was de only t'ing on hees min'.' "

"Which of his poems do you like best?"—it being my turn for a foolish question.

"'Le Vieux Temps'," replied the old man, and then, "but as soon as I say that I think of two others like 'De Habitant and 'Pelang'. "

"I wish you 'd say one of them," said Alice demurely, knowing well she 'd never been refused anything in her life, and never would be.

"I 'm not too good at that, ma'am. Something has to start me, like, as the doctor used to say. I only remember spots of them. 'De Habitant' begins:

"De place where I get born, me, is up on de reever
Near foot of de rapide dat 's call Cheval Blanc.
Beeg mountain behin' it, so high you can't climb it,
An' whole place she's mebbe two honder arpent.

De fader of me, he was habitant farmer,
Ma gran' fader too, an' hees fader also,
Dey don't mak' no monee, but dat is n't fonny,
For it 's not easy get ev'ryt'ing, you mus' know—"

"And sometimes he could prick like a hedgehog quill," continued John Allen. "He was Irish and never forgot it. He got off one fine one here:

"Dat 's place t'ree Irishman get drown,
Wan day we have beeg storm.
I s'pose de Queen is feel lak cry,
Lose dat nice uniform!"

"Do you know ' 'Poleon Doré', ma'am? That a tale of this river, the St. Maurice. True, too."

"I suppose all his poems came from things that happened."

"Oh, yes, ma'am, the doctor was honest-minded," said honest John Allen.

Eventually we released the guide, but not before we 'd got pieces of "Leetle Bateese" and "Ole Tam on Bord a Plouffe" out of him, and filled ourselves with the resolve to hunt down this wholesome-minded poet in earnest. Louis Frechette had called him "pathfinder in the land of song," and from what we had heard it seemed that he had tied into a felicitous braid those various strands of poesy, humor, pathos, nature, and moral justice. He had explained a quaint and not understood people in terms of the simplicities that underlie all races. He had done this with enough slips from his general artistry to make it clear that he was sincerely a human being first, and then a poet. Plainly Dr. William Henry Drummond, who "had left for good" in 1907, as his liegeman put it, had left much affection behind him. This gnarled woodsman was speaking of him as if it had been but yesterday. Truly, that is the rustling of the laurel.

We rode our speeder from purple heights down to the lower levels of blue and bronze and gold without much conversation.

Canto 3: Sanmaur

The Terrible Trio, as Sally-gay thought we ought to be called, managed to remain several days at Wayagamack without precipitating any incidents upon the club.

"It 's fine," said Alice, "but fattening. *Il faut que je* rhythm frantically *chaque soir et matin* so that I can wiggle into the costume you decreed."

"That cake of Mrs. Beauvais's will bring your morning exercises to naught," said Sally-gay. "Life is hard."

"Yes," said Alice, still eating, "Life is hard."

And I think they really would have liked better to go out into the bush and eat beans. But there was enough of that coming. The rain rained in a way that would have been of incalculable value during the drought, but which seemed excessive now; and the railway officers had not yet caused the wreck to be picked up and taken away. So we read Drummond and sent wires to Messrs. Roy and Pickering at Sanmaur, the last telegram announcing that we would arrive on the next train.

I cannot think of anything unkinder than arranging to arrive at Sanmaur. The only west-going train gets there at 2 A. M., and the only east-going leaves at 3.30 A. M., the St. Maurice is too full of rapids to permit of arrival by canoe

or plane, and if you did come by dogs, they would fight with the post dogs and waken the two households anyhow. So there's no way to slip into the place at all, at all.

Sanmaur is the old Montdechingue, the place where the St. Maurice turns north (for those ascending) and leads one into a wilderness not even spoiled by a single-track railroad, the spot where a Hudson's Bay post has been since the earliest days, the scene of a great fight between the old company and their upstart rival, the Northwest Co., a strategic stepping-off place into the circumjacent wilds, and, for us, a haven.

The Beauvais family had again come to the rescue, and through their acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Roy, lonely householders of the plain, had seen to it that we would be welcomed. And that was a relief. It is n't my normal idea of comfort to leap from a train at 2 A. M. into a bedrizzled desert of scrub spruce with two ladies in tow, equipped with nothing but a fund of gaiety and some odd baggage. It is better to be met by a Falstaff named Roy, with a lantern, and the light from his adjacent cottage shining through the murk—to be welcomed like a prodigal family. I can imagine Roy saying: "Hostess, clap to the doors; watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lad, girls, hearts of gold, all the titles of

goodfellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry?''

The effect was very like that, anyway. This big and jovial warden of the wilderness introduced us to home and wife, threw some more birch into the stove, called for refreshment, and at three of the morn we were sitting back in our chairs howling at his irrepressible tales. With malice toward none and a mighty sense of humor, he told us of his countryside. Not that he was garrulous. We cruelly kept him up; and his pretty, dark-eyed wife helped with the enlivening. Finally Sally-gay, who kept at whatever people she suspected of harboring a voice, got Mrs. Roy to sing some of the voyageurs' songs. Right by that very river-bank the voyageurs had passed in their striped cotton shirts and blanket surcoats. Those same spruces that made the dark still darker had seen their fires, *à l' ombre d' un bois*—this very wood. These realities make the romance of Canadian travel.

The romance continued the next morning,—if two hours can be called a night—for the factor of the Hudson's Bay post, Mr. Pickering, came in his canoe from the picturesque white group of buildings across the river to offer his services. I had been brought up, in novels, on his ilk: the handsome younger son, scorning to hang around

the fraternal castle, coming out to Canada, driving dog-trains through blizzards that out-howled the dogs, winning fame and incidental fortune, and returning to the ducal premises in order to wed the exacting heiress of his youthful admiration. Mr. Pickering, of Scotland, fulfilled these conditions to a nicety. From castle to dog-train, from dog-train to reputation, these stages already at an early age had been passed. Little remained to be achieved but the heiress, and when the gentleman in question decides to tear himself away from his emerald seclusion the heiress and the subsequent installation will be merely a matter of railway and steamship schedules.

With a gallant sort of kindness that went particularly to the heart in those surroundings, Mr. Pickering put the facilities of his post at our disposal. Mr. Roy had already arranged for us to visit La Loutre, so we accepted for Pickering's dinner-party on the way back from the Arctic Circle. A curious boat was tugging at the leash, a cool wind swept the oozing clouds aside, we took our seats on the airy prow, and then began the trip of trips.

The St. Maurice River is indeterminably long, no one knowing exactly which is its lengthiest feeder. It rises in a wilderness of lakes on the Height of Land, flows southward to Sanmaur, east to La Tuque, and south again to the St.

Lawrence at Three Rivers. Barring the white water which leaps in one continuous rapid from Sanmaur to La Tuque (about seventy miles), and now paralleled by the train, this river from source to mouth affords one of the easiest and most beautiful canoe trips in eastern America. It could be extended into a voyage 350 miles long by a certain additional lake trip, mentioned later. In many places it is astoundingly wild. As far as I can find by desultory inquiry, it is mentioned in no American geographies, and to most travelers its beauties are unknown. Yet there it flows, a more savage if less stately Hudson. By way of final surprise I found that the greatest dam in the world (that is, the dam storing the greatest quantity of fresh water anywhere on the planet) is situated seventy miles north of the railroad at Sanmaur. Everybody has heard of Assouan; but who has even seen the words La Loutre?

The boat on which we reviewed the passing wilderness belonged to the Brown Corporation. This company maintains a post at the dam to regulate the river's flow, and probably owns the timber-limits through which we stole, hour after hour, against current and wind. There were to be no more houses for the day's journey. Once we saw a white tent where an Indian, en route for the interior, was spending the night. He was

the last soul seen on that stream. Whatever else was nature's; and indeed in these great areas man, emerging a little from nature's earth, seems so intolerably alone and lost, that for him to sink back into the universal matrix appears his easiest fate. While alive, however, he is couched in the wildest beauty.

The hills rose not very high but with superb lines. Along the banks half-extinguished flambeaux of maples lit the way up the autumnal fields; great mountain-flanks of aspen shone with golden slopes, veined with the platinum of birch, and streaked with the water-darkened trunks of rain-denuded maples. The ceaseless river, the wide skies, the clouds hurrying in perpetual flight, the miles of rival vacancy on either hand, all suggested the unutterable wildness of the North. And the bigness of it made marvelous the ambition of man, who, by little and little, arrives at unguessed prodigious ends.

"I suppose I 'll survive it," said Alice, "but it 's tearing me to pieces, the beauty of it."

And Sally-gay, I could see, was opening new storerooms in her brain in which to cache those pictures. Nothing, most philosophers agree, is lost; all things handed over by our several senses to custodian memory are laid away beyond corruption. Yet when and where will they be displayed? How will they be ranged for viewing—

those vistas of purple glens and green slides of spruce and the dancing clusters of faun-loving birches? And who shall see?

With the precision of a solar system, our boat was met by a speeder at the foot of La Loutre rapids and jaunted us another thirty miles to the dam, every jolt of the way being through the most entrancing forest that ever harbored sorcerers or gave birth to fairy-tales. The old rails had carted in the concrete to make the 1870-foot wall which kept the waters in, and were to be forgiven. Partridges sat in the track. A low anemic sun slipped down between the trees, and these now had lost all pretense of existing for man. The oaks, the maples, the apple-trees, the walnuts, pears, and vines of Pennsylvania which had been part of my domesticated youth were unthought of here. This forest existed for moose and bear. It consisted of tall black spruces, ant-concealing birches, harboring thickets of succulent alder—that was all. All, except the now occasional muskeg rank with tufted grass, and a world of moss. I have never seen such beautiful park-land, level, mossy, set with straight-trunked trees.

We probably put Mr. John Carter of the dam to considerable trouble, for he and Captain Rowell had arranged for the ladies' comfort. These gentlemen saw to it that we were escorted about the place and fed with information, as well as

the exceedingly good things to eat which are the sign of a successful lumber company's management. At La Loutre one had lumber-jacking de luxe, a porcelain tub, really hot water, books, a Victrola, and electric lights. La Loutre is probably the station farthest north for electric lights, in our part of America, and it is the only place I ever slept in where heat is automatically turned on so that a man can rise a few minutes later, and dress in a comfortable room.

Canto 4: The Gouin Dam

Civilization is like old age; it wrinkles the face of nature. First it roots up beauty, and last it changes its name as if the obliteration were not perfect. La Loutre, named The Otter for the wondrous way in which the rapids there slip into a great pool, must have been a singularly glorious spot before commerce came. Two hills approach, the waters gather up their skirts and run. The mothering woods look on; knowing that all will be right in the end, that the waters will escape.

But they are caught now. A vast wall of concrete turns them back—back for one hundred and twenty-five miles. A hundred and sixty billion cubic feet of water are disappointed. That is four times the amount stored by the hitherto greatest

dam, the Assouan. Yet the thing cost only two million dollars, surveying and all. All political grafters should be imprisoned with their cells facing La Loutre for their object-lesson.

I spent the evening listening to Captain Rowell, engineer, tell of the great hinterland still farther north. More than three hundred square miles had been flooded. Indian villages had had to be relocated. The Hudson's Bay post at Obijuan had had to move higher, I was told. The result was a labyrinth of half-submerged forest, a maze in which one could paddle, lost for days. My mind watered at the thought of trips possible, desirable objectives in a sort of North Amazonian jungle. The obliging captain got down his maps and pointed out the following trip.

"Start," he said, "at Oscalanea on the Transcontinental eighty miles west to Sanmaur with an Indian there named Charlie Mackenzie for guide, and go via Escalona River, Grand Lac du Sud, Lac du Nord, Obijuan Post, Lac Onigamis, Lac aux Sables, Lac Travers Coutidewastin, Kikendatch, and so to the dam; distance about one hundred and twelve miles. A guide who knew the place before it was flooded is necessary."

I might add that one could start from Ottawa, and paddling on the Gatineau, Escalona, St. Maurice, Bostonnais, Lake St. John, and Sague-

nay, could accomplish as much in distance and variety as one summer can afford on any planet. This tour is not offered by Cooks.

We were on the Height of Land, about 1325 feet above the sea. They told us that the winds blew unceasingly. If the water had been raised a very few feet higher the flow would have turned the other way into Hudson's Bay. That rendezvous of romance seemed very close to us. The ducks that flew over us at sundown had not come from far; the winds that whispered through the reeds had not been wearied by much travel. Winter here must be stark indeed.

. . . . . .

"Il est defendu de parler à la table," was the sign on the mess-room wall. The ladies had wanted to see the lumber-jack in operation, and have a regular "shanty" meal. For breakfast: potatoes, eggs, moose-meat, prunes, bread, syrup, milk, and coffee. Boarding-house people who believe that they have known the prune should apply to the steward of La Loutre for enlightenment. If you add appetite to good cooking you can imagine how those men ate.

"Why the sign?" asked Alice. "They 're not women."

"But they 're Canucks," said Mr. Carter, "good men, but garrulous."

It was the most expeditious exhibition of high-

speed feeding I have ever seen. A small boy bolting dessert to reach the ball-field, or a zoölogical lion, engulfing a slab of horse, might approach in celerity the way those men despatched the provender, but not equal it. One human ostrich took less than five minutes for his four courses. Most of them were done in eight.

"My!" said Sally-gay with a sigh, "can we talk now? I could n't taste anything."

"Evidently Mr. Fletcher was on the wrong track," added Alice; "you never saw such healthy animals in your life. Hog and be husky shall be my motto henceforth. Thirty chews, not to a mouthful, but to a meal."

The rain, which had been stopped for a few hours by an oversight of nature, now, by another sight, began again, and we with it. The forest had looked wild enough coming up on the speeder in the late afternoon. But going down, its swamps, its dripping moss, its dark vistas of wet jack-pine trunks and somber black spruce looked stern, weighted with primeval age. The young fellow Chauvineuve, who drove the three of us to the boat, said that when he had first come up to the place he had been "lonely to tears." Alice said she wondered if that was what was the matter with the weather. Celts weep more easily than Saxons, but that perfectly expressed the feeling of eternal isolation in that

flat, gray forest. We saw no moose, although their tracks were numerous, more of them than usual having been driven eastward by fires from Abitibi. Chauvineuve said that there were few deer about, some caribou, a few wolves, many bear, and of course quantities of the small fur-bearers. A glance at the Hudson's Bay Co. map in Mr. Youngman's office in Montreal (where, thanks to Mr. Hodkinson's indefatigable courtesy, planning was made easy for me) showed a great number of posts operating in the radius of a few hundred miles, testimony of course to the abundance of fur.

Mr. Pickering's dinner-party was delightfulness itself. It was as a drop of civilization, distilled from the Old World and set ashining in the midst of a wilderness, dark with night and storm. The only fellow-beings about were Mr. and Mrs. Roy and the station-agent on the far side of a roaring river, and on this side the Factor and his young man cook just out from England. Unless you include three Indians, two young men waiting for their father to die before they left on their belated hunt. The old man was waiting too, and had brought his coffin into the bedroom so that it might be handy. Picture two very charming women dropped upon Mr. Pickering from the skies, and bringing with them fresh reminder of his far world of castles and heiresses; and again

picture us hearing at first hand, if very modestly, of that even farther world where the Indians had only just ceased from troubling and the wolves had n't yet reached that point. Then judge how interesting the party was.

"It 's only the old, mangy wolves that are bad," said Pickering. "They 'll crowd into a post and bite the dogs and give them hydrophobia. If that happens on a march the whole train goes mad. But as a general rule wolves travel in small packs, usually of four, and won't attack a man. Still, of course we don't trust them."

"But were n't you fearfully lonely?" inquired Sally-gay. "The Northwest Territories sound wide and empty to me."

"So they are. But the Eskimos would drop in occasionally, and there 's one's job to be attended to. And of course now there 's not any danger for a man with tact. It used to be different, particularly a hundred years ago when our rivals, the Northwest Co., brought on an actual war, with battles, burning, pillage, and general hell, if you 'll pardon the term. It was at this very spot that rival parties kept watch for canoes with furs and jumped each other. Lord Strathcona was at this post once."

"It strikes me that it 's sufficiently difficult to master the wilderness without having it complicated by hold-up brigades," I said. "It has re-

quired the resources of the biggest fur company in the world and one of the biggest pulp companies to keep us dry."

"Not dry, but un-drowned," corrected Alice. "You 'd have to paint us in water-colors to make us true to life."

"It 's astonishing how well we keep," said Pickering, "despite all the weathers."

"Canadians ought to be well-preserved," added Sally-gay, "being kept in cold-storage half the year."

I wish that the human organ of appreciation were more elastic. All my life I had heard of the "Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay," had realized that this band of adventurers had been granted the rights "to make peace and war with any prince or people not Christian" and had "the sole right to trade with native tribes on the shores of Hudson's Bay." I knew that Canada's grasp and control was due, in the wilder parts, largely to the Company's "well-trained agents who administer justice and preserve order among the native tribes." I knew this; I was the guest of one of the men who had, despite his youth, administered justice and ordered around the native tribes. In another room were the secret accounts of tradings; within the storehouse would soon be piled the furs. Be-

tween talk we could hear the St. Maurice bearing waters from a wilderness whose only association had been with the men of this company; their forerunners, the *coureurs des bois;* and theirs, the Indians. At the head of the table dispensing hospitality, Pickering, carrying on the ancient tradition of the company, the still more ancient tradition of younger son. Why could n't my romantic lungs know that they were inhaling the rare air of old dreams? Why did n't they tingle with it? I aim to be no stolid Indian and receive wonders with no more enthusiasm than a scrambled egg. Why is it so hard to *feel* history? In old attics you can smell it; but that is as far as it goes. Sometime we may develop an historic sense.

Willy-nilly poor Pickering was a fashionable host, for his guests could n't well leave till early in the morning, having nowhere to go. And when we left it was his responsibility to see that we did n't drown; not in the rain, this time (although it was exceeding the rate technically known as pouring), but in the river.

"The point is," said Pickering, "to aim far enough up so that one does not get sucked into the rapids. You hear them?"

I heard them, a distant guttural bass to the staccato treble of the rain. There was nothing

to see. A heavy murk, that would have put Moses's best darkness in the shade, hung in the air. Alice said that she ought to be taken first so that, if drowned, there would be somebody left to tell Joe. Sally-gay said that it was immaterial to her whether she drowned in the river or on the bank. As for myself—the disadvantage of telling your tale in the first person lies in the fact that one can never work up any anxiety about one's self; but even without anxiety it was lots of fun. We made the double trip without upsetting once. Mr. Roy had prepared a farewell libation of that which keeps one's mind on cheerful subjects. To Sanmaur the clock dial has no significance, apparently. At 3:57 the train screeched, and we left our hosts dissolving into darkness, like Bryant's water-fowl.

"Trust the Terrible Trio to inconvenience people," said Sally-gay. "It 's lucky these good souls have a six months' night coming to them soon."

"What about us?" I suggested. "We have to get off in three hours."

"That 's all right," said Alice, yawning bitterly. "Nothing in moderation—that 's our motto!" And, to judge from later events, it seemed to be.

Canto 5: La Tuque to Lac Sans Nom

Fred surprised us by appearing at La Tuque. The weather surprised us by clearing off. And we surprised ourselves by feeling exceedingly chipper; so much so that when Fred told us that boats and guides were ready we felt quite in the mood to leave La Tuque. About one-third of the credit for this is due to La Tuque.

Marriage may be a lottery, but in marriage at least some of the constant factors are constant some of the time. For the perfection of gambling, try travel.

We were now embarked in two canoes on the St. Maurice, which flows from La Tuque to Grand Piles, about seventy miles, without rapids violent enough to prevent steamer-traffic. For a cursory glance at the river-banks it is sufficient to take the steamer. I tried waiting once (the steamer is a temperamental thing), and after waiting three days in La Tuque was told that it had slipped up by night and away again. Not feeling capable of another three days in La Tuque I made one cursory glance do me, and went down the St. Maurice by train.

But the river trip ought to be made by the river, and in a canoe, to be satisfying. And whether one sleeps at the occasional habitant farms or takes tents, the thing should be done loiteringly,

and in the autumn. The last two weeks of September and the first week in October should find the trees in their most distinguished stage.

Before leaving La Tuque you must know that the name of the place comes from a rocky cap, scraggly with spruce, rising high on the eastern bank, near which Mr. Brown of the corporation has a beautifully situated home, near where (I believe) the old Hudson's Bay post was located. The best view of La Tuque is had by the leave-taker; and from mid-river. Thence the garish part of the place is hid; you see wooded palisades and a line of white painted houses on the shore. The wide composure of the easy stream soothes away the past.

It was almost restful, paddling with the current. I knelt in the bow of Fred's canoe and passed the water back to him. We seemed to go at astonishing speed for the little effort. We flashed by logs that had escaped from Brown's, passed the long island which had seemed so far away, passed the outlet to Lake Wayagamack, and settled down to hour after hour of it, never changing speed or sides—an Indian recipe for growing oblivious of fatigue.

The rain soon started, and although it failed to reach its normal intensity, we decided on dinner *chez un habitant* whom Fred had often stayed with on winter log-hauling trips up and down the

river. From their sunset-facing cove we had a view of curving shores, gleaming forest, and a glimpse of the river leaping into a full-throated gorge below. We also had habitant fare at its best. Alice spent the time trying to get a conservative and rather callous-faced cat to be friends; while Sally-gay spent hers stripping the floors of hand-woven rugs. Intermittently between these occupations both girls tried to induce the male chorus, with which every habitant home is equipped, to sing to us. One hated to leave; but L' Anse Sans Nom, where we should sleep, was twenty miles beyond the twenty we had come. So we added the rugs to our sporting-goods equipment and went on.

The beauty of that afternoon was masked only a little by the rain. Palisades loomed duskily through blurry distances; and we saw the dim, inviting entrance of the Rivière Aux Rats, and the foliage of not yet forgotten autumn. All that we felt, all that was said cannot be Boswellized upon a page. One remark though: Sally-gay, well-read in the philosophers, on rising from her cramped quarters in the canoe, said that she now understood the Mohammedan future better, as she was experiencing Nirvana from the knees down.

Fred, who hoped some day to lease territory from the Government for a string of camps for

sportsmen, had suggested that we break our journey at this midway point and take an excursion inland to some lakes he knew. We wanted to see his choice, wanted to see some moose, and to observe Fred in action, the ladies having heard a good deal about his camp-craft. So next morning we accumulated additional impedimenta and set forth as follows:

Louis, a resident of the place, with a horse and sledge with our duffle.

Fred, carrying a canoe.

Alice with a revolver for partridges.

Moi, with fishing-rod and a partridge receiver.

Sally-gay with camera and the Swiss bread.

Ferdinand, an extra guide, carrying another canoe.

Louis's horse was a stalwart animal about the size of an elephant, and correspondingly strong. This was fortunate because the road, besides mounting a story at a time, frequently led over stumps instead of around them. The sledge creaked and the duffle tossed like a packet in the Irish sea; but the horse pulled on and Louis, contrary to French custom, treated him with consideration and kindness.

Ferdinand, we knew at once, was going to be an interesting addition to our retinue. He was slight but strong, smiling, courteous, and skilful, a little lazy but indefinitely willing if told. He

was also full of song, which pleased Sally-gay, and fond of telling stories, which pleased Alice. He and Fred had often worked together on like parties, so their efforts blended to quick effects. It was an auspicious beginning for any party, and to add to our joyance a dappled sky shed a quiet autumnal sun into the ravine up which our train was winding its way.

Half-way we halted so that the column could reform in partridge-hunting formation. Alice and revolver led, *moi* next, then Sally-gay with the camera, and the heavy battery of moose-rifle, canoes, and duffle strung along the rear. Peace lay on the hills, sunlight up the trail, and the wind was still. It seemed rather a shame to shoot anything; but sentiment must give way to soup. We wanted partridge stew. On all our previous walks the birds had loitered in the paths before us, looking us over. For this reason we had chosen the revolver, for, although neither Alice nor I had ever used a revolver much, it seemed scarcely the sportsmanlike thing to use a shotgun where one had to back away from the birds in order to shoot them easily.

After proceeding, tense as tiger-hunters, for half a mile with our cavalcade behind us, we saw the familiar dartle in the bush, an apparition of a hen partridge crossing the trail. Then, that thrill every hunter has along the spine when the

game 's in sight! I held up my hand and the caravan halted. Alice held up the revolver. And fired. The partridge held up its head, and looked at us. Sally-gay moved a step closer with the camera.

Alice now fired again. In my sport-bewildered way, I was guilty of an indecorum. I said, "Let 's *each* take two shots."

Of course I was immediately ashamed of what I 'd said, but Alice pressed the revolver upon me. I took my two and handed the revolver back to Alice. Her third had some effect, or else the partridge had made sure that we were carrying firearms, for it stepped out of the open space, where it had been sitting, and began to walk away.

"Aim ahead," I implored Alice.

"Aim lower," suggested Fred, resting his canoe.

Alice, nearly as cool as the bird itself, aimed ahead, and lower, and doubtless would have immolated the wild thing, if it had not stepped aside.

"It 's your turn," she said.

"Take another," I begged, beginning to remember my manners.

"No, finish it," she said.

Possibly I might have yielded to this flattery and taken some more shots, had not the bird concluded to withdraw, expertly and instantaneously. This she did. And only then did we get

the full funniness of the situation: looking around in a dazed, nerve-bedraggled manner we suddenly visualized the peaceful trail, the calm, deliberate bird, our ignoble endeavors to exterminate it, Sally-gay having buck-fever with the camera, Fred politely resting his canoe, further along Ferdinand resting his, and at the tail of the cavalcade Louis with sledge and duffle and that peasant-faced horse, all waiting with infinite courtesy and patience until we should have finished off the partridge at our feet!

There may be innumerable uses for a revolver, as the advertisements insist; but the misuses of it are even more innumerable. One of these, as Alice and I will attest, is partridge-hunting, particularly *en retinue.*

It was dusk before we had dismissed Louis and the horse, transferred ourselves and duffle to a wooded slope of Lac Sans Nom in canoes, and picked a camp-ground. I rejoiced in no responsibility. In fifteen minutes the tent-sites were cleaned and smoothed, in thirty the tents were up, in forty-five supper was simmering on the fire, and in another hour disposed of. The ample evening spread before us. It was to furnish the ladies, who had not done this sort of thing, with an unforgettable picture. For the sole time on our trip the sky was cloudless, and we went out on the lake to call moose.

I hope that Fred can lease this country for the usual ninety-nine years, because it is his long desire made visible in lakes and hills and trees. He will be careful of the dreams it hoards. Certainly that night was charged with them. We rested in our canoes with Fred somewhere beyond near shore. The silence of deserted lands ringed us, and high through the starry waste rose that V of the Pleiades, winging before Orion, the hunter, like a flight of golden geese. From the north came fore-shimmerings of the aurora. The world was as still as a room; in fact the yellow candle which Fred had lit to show the landing burned with a steady flame, making a spiritual spot of beauty in the hollow dark.

His call began gently, rose until one was sure it would be heard along the farthest valleys, and then subsided into some insinuating grunts, which may sound very delicious to the distant bull, but which reminded me of a dying Sunday-school organ. Then Fred's canoe drifted noiselessly up to ours, and we listened, listened till I thought the silence would crush us, and heard the shadowy, deep-voiced answer of the bull, disturbed in his hill-browsing by this broadcast love-call. He may have been confused as to the direction, or a rude Romeo, for he did not show up, and when the quarter-moon sank down into the balsam, so did we. It was Alice's first night on boughs.

Next morning we called over to hear how they slept. "J'ai dormis putrid," said Alice, good-naturedly. "Rotten in its intensest tense. Send in the maid."

But when Ferdinand had a fire leaping in front of their tent, and Fred had started the coffee fragrance going, and they had brushed their hairs and discovered that they 'd each had half a night, one could see that they were in nature's thrall.

"I 'll get the best of that bed yet," said Alice, "but why did n't you keep the animals away. I heard the lynxes running up and down the trees, with other things sitting on the tent."

"It 's hard to know where private life begins in camping," said Sally-gay, hanging up her toothbrush on a tree.

"Those whisky-soaks draw no line," said Alice pointing to a group of whisky-jacks which were pecking insolently at our butter on the table just constructed. How those birds did love us! The English sparrow seems a timid and suspicious trifler compared with the audacious freebootery which these birds carried on. But in that primal land there are bonds, however slight, between living being and living being, and I admired their confidence and unafraidness.

Were I making a book of this chapter I would tell what ripping camp-fellows Sally-gay and Alice were, and how it poured, and what prodigies

of comfort Fred improvised—balsam roof above the fire, birch-bark utensils, something for every need. I would repeat the girls' witticisms and Fred's stories and Ferdinand's songs, and describe the side-trips to see otter-slides, and the occasion on which we surprised a bear fishing through the alders for trout. I would make the office-bound reader sick with envy of the life we led on those beautiful lakes, and of the companionship with those women, so hearty, so stimulating, so appreciative. This hinterland was new to them in a hundred ways, yet none of its evasive beauty was lost. It was that appreciation which I the planner, Fred the performer, and Ferdinand the paid-hand, appreciated in turn. Lack of it makes the job of taking womankind to the woods a sickening thing. It must not be the appreciation of the lips only, which is even worse, but an innate, unspoken thing as unpremeditated and natural as first love. Having it women are woods-fit, and the final delight of those who love the Silent Places.

We persuaded Ferdinand to help us down the rest of the St. Maurice. Ferdinand in flannel shirt or Ferdinand in stiff collar as first aid to the priest at the Church of L'Anse Sans Nom was still Ferdinand, naïve, and laughter-liking. Up and down the frozen stream in winter he carried the mail which was entrusted to the temperamen-

tal steamer in summer, and as we paddled down every point recalled an anecdote or a song. Of the latter I must give a song about a partridge hunter which we all liked most. I 'll never see the words without seeing young Ferdinand's brown eyes laughing and hearing his really good voice telling this silly tale in the beguiling minor of its tune.

CHANSON DU CHASSEUR

C' est un petit bonhomme
Qui s' appelait Gregory
Carabis.
Il s' en va-t-a la chasse,
A la chasse aux perdrix
Carabis.
Tiens, bien, Carabin,

Tu, ru, te, tu,
Te laisseras tu mourir?
Il s' en va-t-a la chasse,
A la chasse aux perdrix
Carabis.
Il monte dans une arbre
Pour voir le chien courir
Carabis.
Tiens, bien, Carabin

Tu, ru, te, tu,
Te laisseras tu mourir?
Il monte. . . . (etc., the new couplets being:)

La branche vient ta rompre
Et Gregory tombait.

Il se brise la, jambe
Et s' en bras c' est demis,

Les dames de l' hôpital
Sont accouries a lui.
L' une avec un emplat
Et l' autre du sharpi,
Carabis.
Il a dit que je prefer
Un petit verre du whisky,
Carabis.
Tiens, bien, Carabin,

Tu, ru, te, tu,
Te laisseras tu mourir?

Canto 6: To Grand Piles and Lac la Pêche

The St. Maurice might not appeal to the advanced school of tourists known as the Euclideans who are only interested in the swiftest line between two points, the two points being the start and finish. For the St. Maurice is eminently a loafer's paradise. It pursues a sufficiently direct route, personally, to please any Euclidean; but a glance at the large map (that one can coax from Quebec), reveals its paradisal qualities: a hundred little rivers up which one may pole, and two hundred little lakes for each little river; with here and there a mountain range. Cowper sighing for his lodge in some vast wilderness should have known of the St. Maurice; Omar trudging along laden with a book of verses, a loaf of bread, and

a jug of wine, could here have found his bough beneath which to enjoy them. While we, only just inoculated with savagery, and but one day above the comparative civilization of the Laurentian Club, we said farewell to L' Anse Sans Nom with heartfelt if conservatively worded regret.

"Do you realize," said Alice, "that this is one of the places that we do not come back to?" As anybody knows, certain unpremeditated raptures cannot be found again, no matter how much one may haunt the geographical spot of their first occurrence.

The rest of the river was to be negotiated in a long canoe, Ferdinand bow paddle, the Terrible Trio and their still more terrible duffle in the middle, and Fred in the stern. It was to be a trip de luxe. And to make it so we borrowed some cushions to sit on. They were green.

Rainstorms seem to reach their highest development along the St. Maurice, both in effectiveness and intelligence. Instead of beginning to rain at breakfast-time and thus spoiling the day for travelers, they hold up until the traveling has begun and then spoil it. Alice said that she had not really needed any of the baths she had taken en route, the rain had been so extremely thorough; it was only that she preferred to wash herself. There was only one good point about the storm which now began: it did not let us know that it

was to last until we had left the Laurentians mistily behind us.

For the first hours it was not so bad. The current was swift, and the canoe-men strong. The ladies sang and I bailed. I noticed that the rain had now a greenish tinge but supposed that was only natural in so wild a region. It was getting colder, too, but that was only natural. So were we, which was only natural, also.

I was most interested in the entrance of the Mattawin River from the west. Long months before, I had stared at the other end of it, from Tremblant Mountain, with a surmise that would have been even wilder than Cortez's if I had yielded to it. For hundreds of miles that stream threaded a wilderness stocked with adventure. It is rather a pity that it is so nearly unnavigable.

Unfortunately our current slowed up above Grand Piles, an act which was not imitated by the rain. We had omitted lunch in our haste to reach final shelter. Everybody was cold and hungry, though I must say still cheerful, when Ferdinand made his impossible assertion. He said that he knew a house where they kept a motor-boat that could take us to Grand Piles before dark. Had I not been so sorry for Ferdinand, dripping and fatigued, I would have known better than to believe his statement. As the rain had made our canoe look successively like a finger-bowl, a soup-

tureen, and a bathtub of sea-water owing to the extraordinary richness of the green dye in the pillows, I thought it better to make use of Ferdinand's advantageous offer. So we hove to at about an hour before dusk at a lonely and bedraggled village in order to resume our voyage in the motor-boat.

Only then did we notice the pillow-havoc. Sally-gay's hand-made habitant rugs, Alice's duffle, even the seat of my breeches had all changed their expression, the former dignified fabrics having taken on a permanent green simper. Sally-gay picked up the erring cushions which were still leaking color, and said, "What shall we do with them?"

"Let 's leave them," said Alice. "I think we 've got the best of the green."

We climbed the bank to the store, noting that the rain had stopped. Indeed it timed its efforts to ours with almost chronometrical precision.

The man who lived, or thought he lived, in that woe-begotten spot where we had halted was glad to see us. Presumably he had rented out his motor-boat before. And in order to blind us to our next step he brought out some wine. I 've forgotten whether it was made of grapes or dandelions or geraniums; there was somthing about it, anyway. The effect on Ferdinand was noticeable at once. This shows how unjustly wine

works. Wine is intended to make one forget motor-boats. As a matter of fact Ferdinand was the only one who was not to be subjected to the motor-boat. The rest of us could not forget.

The motor-boat owner had the foresight to have a son to run his boat for him, and, when word came up from the water-front that the engine had consented to go, we clambered aboard. Ferdinand pressed his au revoirs upon us, declaring that no party in the past had warmed his feelings so, and mourning that none in the future likely would.

The engine coughed, and they pushed us off. Ferdinand rushed to a hillock for a final farewell, and remembering Sally-gay's passion for song, burst into "L' Allouette." The lyric was already burdened with memories for us. But I think no one of us will consider this the least of them: the devoted little man, crowing out his enthusiasm in a torrent of song, the high notes flat as a tire, yet with much sincerity behind the wine, behind the gestures that made a windmill's motions look restricted. Ferdinand's farewell was funny, yet not altogether funny either.

And the same could be said of the motor-boat. We had been pushed off, not because the motoring arrangements had been completed, but because (as I see now) the owner was in sad need of money. A high north wind had followed the rain,

a new moon, looking as cold as Copenhagen, sailed through shoals of clouds without grounding, and apparently without having to be cranked. Knowing nothing about engines, I sat out of the way and shivered while Fred and the owner pursued the process called motor-boating. It 's a secret process done mostly with a wrench and an oil-can. Unfortunately the owner did n't seem to be in the secret.

I have no desire to reproduce the ghastliness of the next three hours. Dark succeeded moonshine, a freezing gale followed the merely cold wind of afternoon; but the most the engine would do was sniff, sneeze, cough for a breathless moment or two, and then sulk for forty. Finally it was clear that the sequence of disabilities had brought us into actual peril. It was genuinely rough already. It was impossible to land, and pointless anyway in such a wilderness. And as we had got but imperfectly dried in the house the cold was burrowing sinisterly for our vitals.

"Remember our motto," said Alice; "nothing in moderation."

"If this river were salt I 'd say swim for shore," said Sally-gay.

"Our end will be just as bitter," said Alice. And they kept it up, either chaffing our fate till it turned tail and fled, or picturing the delights of the Laurentian Club, until we were as good as

surrounded by hot baths and food and beds. Imagination, especially when manipulated by two witty and high-spirited women, is the armorplate of joy. I firmly believe that if they had yielded to the total of our petty disasters and wept, they would not have come through that exposure scatheless. Tears would not have been unreasonable, however.

The next morning dawned damply in Grand Piles. Possibly this was our fault. Of course I do not want to be criticized for having any *kaiserliche* pretensions; but we had noticed so repeatedly the simple fact that whenever we moved it caused rain that the conclusion was becoming obvious.

None of us had ever been in to Lac la Pêche, and consequently could not imagine the state of the roads. When we asked a native if he could drive us to the Laurentian Club and he said, "Ah, oui," we fell into the old-fashioned habit of believing him. "We could star as the Simple-Minded Sisters," said Alice, hours later, when the worst was known.

So we hired two buckboards and one driver. As the horses had derived their conception of speed from the study of glaciers, the driver felt safe in coming back alone. And anyway there was no other.

While toiling up the first half-mile, which was

nearly vertical, we had time to say farewell to the St. Maurice. At Grand Piles it undergoes a partial taming, which is completed at Grand' Mère, and repeated at Shawinigan Falls and Three Rivers. I was glad to turn inland and not to witness its subjection to pulp-mill and towns, tawdry or model. I wanted to remember the sense of seclusion it had given us for so many days—seclusion conveyed, despite its greatness, by the sheltering palisades and interminable forest. I wanted no scenes of brick chimneys and freight-cars to overlay the pictures of its early beauty—those full-blooded rapids we had run and those glittering riffles that no man dare encounter; the parrot-colored glens still gay with autumn, and the heights already hushed to their thin winter purples. Most of all I desired nothing to interfere with those dreamlike days on the upper stream, and the imagination's quests into the hinterland where the fur-getters go and the Indians live according to tradition. The rest were silent, too, being also busy with memory.

To be wholly truthful, I must say that conversational interplay between our buckboards was considerably curbed by the fear of severing our tongues. The man who originally laid out the road must have done it in a mood of venomous spite toward travelers. The carriages would climb a rocky ledge, balance delicately, and then

plunge down to the general level again. Sometimes the horse succeeded in slipping out from underneath, in which case the wagon fell further. We sacrificed first ease and then comfort and finally bare safety to our desire to reach the club. I began to wonder how they could transport supplies, to say nothing of timid guests, over such a road. It never occurred to me that they did n't. Not, at least, until we reached the lake.

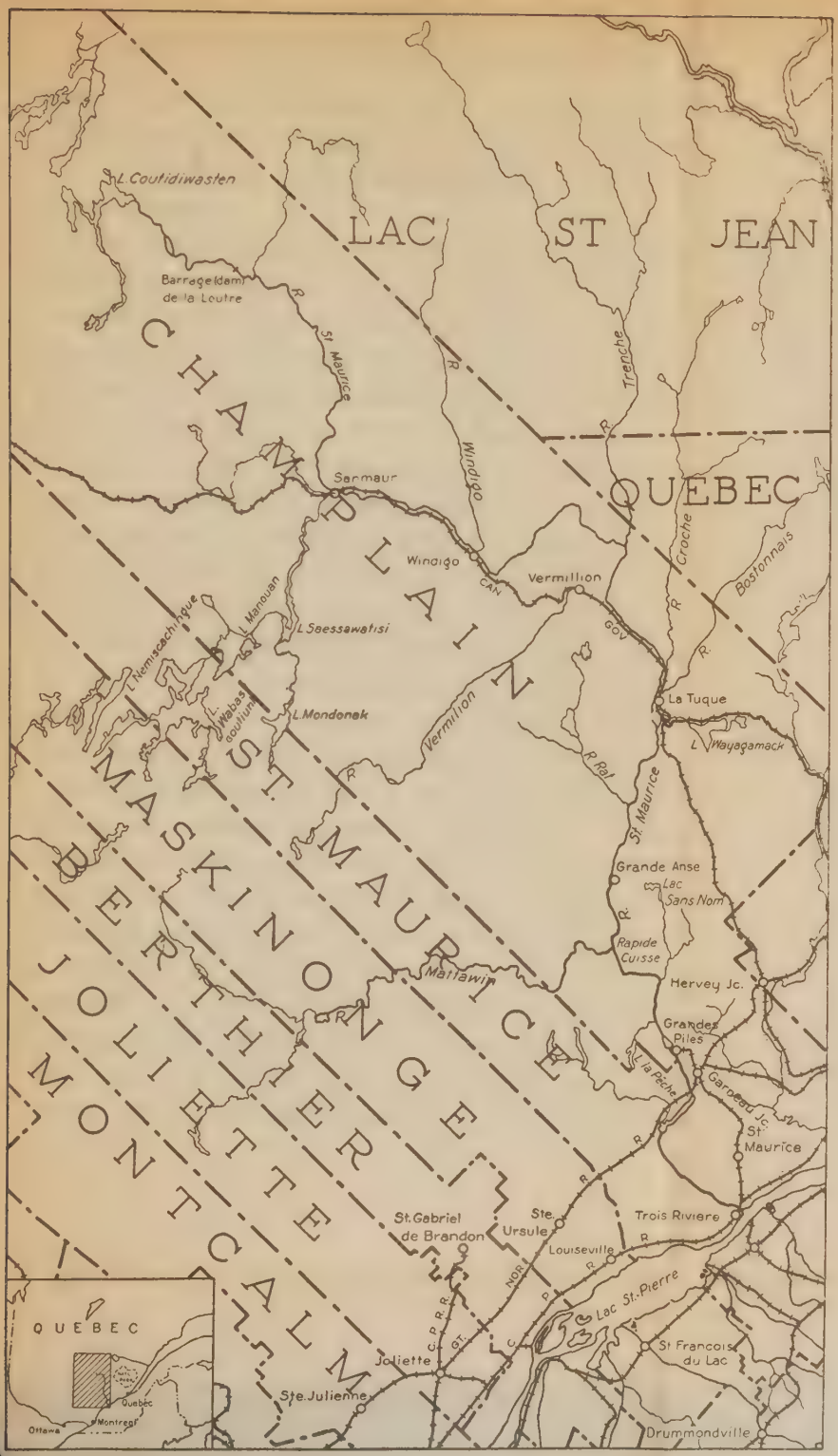
When this idea did occur, it came forcefully and simultaneously to all of us. For we saw before us a grassy cove, an extensive body of water, the roof of the clubhouse on the distant horizon, and nothing else.

"Pas telephoné?" asked our driver.

"You said you 'd drive us to the club."

"Ah, oui, mais il vous faut telephoner pour le batteau."

That was obvious; more obvious than to know what to do next. Certainly no one of us could contemplate riding back, not without being bandaged. This was when Alice said that we could qualify for the circuit. Yet events had been so worded that it was nobody's fault, not even the driver's. We gave him some money to telephone (which he never did) and sat down to await the effect. We calculated that this would take four hours. And now even the zodiac took pity on us. A noon sun broke through the clouds, and warmed



ST. MAURICE WATERSHED

some logs for us to sit on. Our hopes broke out afresh, and it seemed quite enjoyable to finish off our adventuring with being castaways upon a desert beach.

The desertedness of it was efficient without being uncomfortable. The void around us was screened from view by pretty clumps of spruce, and there was a charming cove in which we could loll for the next few days until hunger should dull our esthetic edge. In order to observe the proprieties of the castaway Sally-gay tied some towels together and I hung them to a tree for signal to the conventional boat of rescue. Only we intended to do our signaling completely and amplified the towels with a fire. We hoped that the Laurentian Clubbers would guess that it was too cold for spontaneous combustion and hasten to scare the trespassers from their premises. But they were either very nonchalant or at dinner.

Nothing shows up one's state of mind more personally than waiting. Particularly while waiting on a desert island. Then, if ever, one's reaction to that intangible presence of our past, called fate, becomes evident and others see us in a way that is more than usually visible. Consequently it was like Fred, ever used to the nip of circumstance and the niceties of self-aid, to rescue us. While we were sitting around priding ourselves on our strength of mind in being able to

continue amiable under the exasperating circumstances, Fred was nosing about the beach looking over our resources. There was a lot of grass and a lot of water, and if we had been sea-cows, say, the situation would have been alluring. But the lack of anything seemed only to stimulate the boy, and while we were just remarking in our genial conversational way how nice it would be to make a raft, Fred came poling around the point on one. It was a raft reduced to the most economical terms, being two large logs with a flattish smaller log thrown across, and propelled by a still smaller.

"Will you get there on *that?*" asked Alice.

"Sure," said Fred, and set off along the shore. We watched him round a cape, and reappear along the far shore, poling steadily and confidently until he had poled himself from sight and out of this story.

The Terrible Trio settled back into their most comfortable positions for gossip.

Epilogue

"It has been an amazing trip," said Alice, poking another stick into the fire; "amazingly uncomfortable and amazingly satisfying."

"A trip of paradoxes," added Sally-gay. "I began it tired, have done more and been done to more than ever in my life, and yet here I am rested."

"Because we have been unforgettably happy," I ventured, "thanks partly to the beauty of things, and partly to your heroic readiness to meet adventure."

Sally-gay started to protest, but Alice stopped her. "Let him go on," she said, "Nothing in moderation, remember; not even flattery."

"I was n 't flattering you," said I; "merely paving the way to propound my new theory of happiness."

"All right, propound away," laughed Alice; "there 's plenty of time."

"We 've been happy because we 've seen farther than ever before, and vision *is* happiness. Is n't that so, philosopher?"

"But what when the vision is over?" asked Sally-gay.

"That 's the beauty of it; it is never over. The vision has given you stature, has lifted you above the level of some previously enclosing wall, and made you a permanently bigger person. The larger your sympathies the better you are."

"Mine enlarged enormously on that buck-board," said Alice, "but they were for myself. Does that count?"

. . . . . .

So waned the afternoon; and for me those hours of wit, women, and warming sun were the

quintessence of the trip's delights. With the first sound of oars the trip for me was over.

Of course there is much else to chronicle: the hospitable reception at the club; exceedingly interesting talks with Commodore Parker, the sprightly-witted gentleman who started the Laurentian Club and many others, and who, despite his eighty-odd years, took a keen interest in our doings; the trip to Little Lac Grenier, near-by, about which Drummond wrote the most charming of his lyrics, whose first stanza runs:

> Leetle Lac Grenier, she 's all alone,
> Right on de mountain-top;
> But cloud sweepin' by will fin' tam to stop
> No matter how quickly he want to go,
> So he 'll kiss leetle Grenier down below.

But chronicles must have an end, even if travels never do.

Next morning it was snowing when Fred and I started our long drive to Grand' Mère. The heavy wet flakes blew into my eyes, and I was glad to be blinded, for I could so much the better see the pictures that thronged before my mind—Matamek and our camp on the Mistassini, the college-like days at Roberval, Thaddée of the fishing-squad at St. Basile, that night beneath Eternity—pictures of a summer already incredibly distant. Distant but present, and unfading,

too: Rutherford, François, Alice and Sally-gay and Fred, La Grande Décharge, the whole majestic Saguenay, the North!

What seven-league boots I had worn! And how true it is that each step I had taken was an eternity long, that the effect of each affinity with whom I had got in stride would march with me forever. I had set out to see the oldest mountains in the world; but I was returning with priceless souvenirs of an even older make, affections. Nor was my new store of these a useless collection to be set aside, for affections are sharp tools with which we help to blaze our way into the untrailed future.

Chronicles must end, I repeat, though journeys never do. Fred and I were to part at the Junction. We wiped the snow out of our faces and tried to smile, but it was about as unsuccessful as the weather.

"I hate to say good-by," he said; "somehow it 's been—"

"I can't either," said I; "it certainly has been—"

And then we had gripped hands, incontestably, and I found that that did very well instead.

SOME PRACTICAL ADDENDA

OUR Don Marquis has observed that for a poet to issue his first book of poems is very like letting fall a rose-leaf into the Grand Cañon and waiting for the echo. I, too, have noticed that a travel-book dropping from the press makes about the same amount of uproar as the rose-leaf.

But with this volume all will be changed. I fancy that there will be a response to it, a response, let me hasten to add, in the form of a wild unanimous howl of rage when the (assumed) readers shall have got this far, only to discover that they have been tricked into reading, or worse, buying (though this is rarer) a book which has n't a single Baedekerish star in it, a book which contains no comments on currency, duration of voyage, passports, estimated expenses, custom-houses, climate, plan of tour, what to tip, and where to check umbrellas; a book that offers no general hints on underclothes, or how to behave on public holidays, with times for pedestrians; a book that has got them nowhere, though not very specifically and then left them there.

Unfortunately, what has been wreaked on four

hundred and fifty pages can scarcely be remedied in four, but, while still unable to offer any noteworthy ideas on the fine arts, morals of the aborigines, or the penal institutions of the district under consideration, I have saved a few practical remarks for the end, the first of which concerns the—

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A nation, during its lifetime, may be known by divers things—French dressing, German toys, the Russian Ballet, the roast beef of old England. But in the end a nation is chiefly memorable for its culture, and this is chiefly handed down through its literature. On this basis French Canada would make a lean showing in the archives of the future, and still leaner is the collection of writings on the great, varied, and fascinating region which concerns us here.

I have no intention of collating a list of titles which nobody would read anyway, but am desirous of putting down a few of the books to which I am indebted for stimulation and information, and which any one intending to see this region might well read beforehand.

Foremost comes Francis Parkman. In his "Champlain" and "The Jesuits in North

America" and "The Old Régime in Canada" there is told the tale of heroes and saints in such a moving manner and in such imperishable prose that their saga has been written for all time. Therein are preserved the best of the Jesuit "Relations," those Pepys diaries of the Western world.

Next in importance, for the pleasure of knowing the dwellers in this land, is Louis Hemon's "Maria Chapdelaine," in the original, while for information "The Ouananiche and Its Canadian Environment" by Mr. E. T. D. Chambers, out of print but obtainable in a few libraries, is of great value and interest. And, to conclude the list of "compulsory reading," buy, if you can, Lt.-Col. William Wood's "In the Heart of Old Canada" for his chapters on "The Habitant" and "French-Canadian Folksong." This is published by Briggs of Toronto. Col. Wood is an authority and an artist, whose vital and yet sensitive pen writes of northeastern Canada in a way that conveys some notion of the scholarly and magnetic man behind the pen. It also conveys the truth with rare charm and wit.

I read parts of many other books, all of which bear enough on the subject to be mentioned, yet not heavily enough to warrant much excitement. "Quebec" by Beckles Willson covers much ground, but hastily. I have been told that Mr.

Willson's book on the Hudson's Bay Co., "The Great Company," is the best on that romantic subject.

"Le Saguenay," by Arthur Buies, is filled with historical minutiæ.

Sir Gilbert Parker's "The Right of Way" is melodrama at its best, and contains the whole dramatis personæ of habitant-land as well. But the difference between a ripping good story and reality can be discerned by comparing it with Hémon's masterpiece.

"Life and Sport on the North Shore," by Napoleon A. Comeau, is an account of fishing and hunting on the lower St. Lawrence, unpretentious but true.

W. H. H. Murray's "Doom of the Mamelons," a forgotten book laid near Tadousac.

In "From my Quebec Scrapbook," by G. M. Fairchild, Jr., there are attractive essays on habitant life, as also in Louis Frechette's "La Noël au Canada."

I know of no more interesting way to people the bush with life than to read "The Life Histories of North American Mammals," by Ernest Thompson Seton. In this engrossing two-volume work the artist-naturalist gives beautifully all the available information about the dozens of kinds of animals which invisibly surround the voyager in the Quebec wilderness. Unless one

knows that each square mile of forest is actually harboring weasels and mink and all the rest, and unless he knows something of their little humors and their tragedies, he will pass through the silence and desolation of the "brule" sadly missing the chief thrill it can give him. Charles G. D. Roberts and Arthur Heming (in "The Drama of the Forest") perform an equivalent function for one in poetic and fairly complete manner.

Of course William Henry Drummond's unique quartet, "The Habitant," "The Voyageur," "Johnnie Courteau," and "The Great Fight," should be owned, in the order named, for his dozen best poems have a way of recalling you to them again and yet again.

There are many charming essays on this region, scattered through Henry Van Dyke's works, in John Burroughs's, and the magazines of Canada and the United States. But the readable books about it have yet to be written, all the information yet available being salted away in Government reports or scientific monographs. It seems strange that there has not been an authoritative volume on the Saguenay, or on the magical hinterland on either side of it, peopled for a century and known of for three. It seems strange that nobody had begun writing the book of the Montagnais Indian until luckily for them, Mr. Frank G. Speck dedicated his life to this undertaking. The

result will be a veritable treasure. Meanwhile, this country lacks its Marco Polo, its Thoreau, its Hudson, or even its Bret Harte.

SOME RANDOM HINTS

If there be any universal secret of happy travel, it lies in finding the soul of the people and places where one goes. This is rarely done by antagonizing the natives. And the natives of habitant-land can be antagonized on the spur of the moment merely by any one suggesting that they speak a patois. The French-Canadians are even more keenly sensitive about their language than Americans in England.

The consensus of opinion of those who know is that the habitant speaks no patois, "no degenerate form of standard speech," but a genuine old French which has been invaded somewhat by Anglicisms and a few Indian and Canadian words. Certainly the English idiom, as she is twisted on Broadway, would not be so intelligible to King James as to make us able to throw stones at our neighbors, who, as a matter of fact, would be intelligible to Jacques Cartier or Montcalm.

Another method of not getting under the French-Canadian skin is to presuppose that it is coarser than the Saxon cuticle, that these cheerful,

easy-going farmers are a bit inferior to yourself, who are lugging around a bagful of British blood. The world, it is true, would not spin with the same celerity if there were only habitants at the wheel. But as Col. Wood, with his usual incisiveness, says, "'Business is business' is an excellent definition of a most excellent thing." That 's all it is, and not the whole of life. The habitant has mastered some of the art of life which it would be well for the New Yorker to know, and which the tourist New Yorker will never learn if he approach the habitant as a relic, a curiosity, or a human being inferior in soul-power or even thought-power to himself.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nothing gives just the same degree of pleasure to a man as acknowledging a real indebtedness, for the inherent sense of justice in us is forever seeking satisfaction. This is why the mystic finds a speechless ecstasy in thanking God, and why the mails are crossed with letters from unknown readers to writers they have never met.

When it comes, however, to acknowledging my indebtedness for all the helpfulness and interest shown me while I was in the process of flux necessary to seeing Laurentian-land, my sense of justice gets absolutely flurried. If I mention that it was due to J. Ade. Tremblay's hospitality that I met M. Gonsalve Desaulniers, to whom I am indebted for the pleasure of meeting the Honorable M. Perrault, who passed me on to the Honorable Honore Mercier, who did his best to get me in touch with the Government, that is only following up one line of gratitude, while leaving others of importance in its wake unacknowledged.

Individual mention being impossible, I still cannot refrain from thanking a few of those

whom I assailed more than the average number of times for information. There was Mr. John Murray Gibbon, who (not only as an officer of the C. P. R. but as a writer and a sort of current stepfather of Canadian literature) gave me encouragement, concrete as well as informational. And when he wasn't helping me, Mr. Allyn O. Seymour of the C. P. R. was. Then there is Mr. Walter Rutherford, whose creative eye not only through his camera, but in many a letter, has added to these pages' usefulness. And Pere Courtois of Chicoutimi intrusted his films to me, a stranger, and in Ottawa M. C. Marius Barbeau interrupted his pressing work to dig out pamphlets and to give me the results of his beautiful photography. Nor has anybody been more generously considerate than Mr. Frank G. Speck of the University of Pennsylvania. I was glad to have the results of skill and knowledge of these men; but after contact with stolid politicians and the almost equally uncaring rural mind, it was a heart-warming pleasure to find men so responsive and so kind. It is this personal and professional hospitality of theirs which I can never sufficiently acknowledge.

Of the lift here and the word of encouragement there, of Ballanger and Naud in Roberval, and

Tom Nesbitt in Chicoutimi, and the many others along the way I cannot speak. Nor of Mr. R. H. Hathaway, and Mrs. W. H. Drummond, and those who aided with letters. In the text I have tried to mention the men who made living and memorable mile-stones down my summer. And, as in the rush of Christmas, one forgets the friend nearest at heart, so I shall doubtless find that I've unmentioned some old friend like Adin Ballou who hunted Metropolitan libraries for me, or Alfred L. Donaldson and Arthur H. Thomas who kindly put their finger (or their foot) on errorful pages still fresh with the morning ink.

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